

BOHEMIA INVADED

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BOHEMIA INVADED.

The Bijou Series.

A Bubble. L. B. WALFORD.

A Question of Color. F. C. PHILIPS.

Chiffon's Marriage. GYP.

Private Tinker, etc.

JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

Bohemia Invaded. JAMES L. FORD.

A White Baby. JAMES WELSH.

The Red Spell. FRANCIS GRIBBLE.

From *The International Dictionary*:

"Bijou; a word applied to anything small and of elegant workmanship."

Frederick A. Stokes Company,

Publishers, New York.



Bohemia Invaded

And Other Stories

BY JAMES L. FORD

*Author of "Hypnotic Tales," "The Literary
Shop," Etc.*

WITH FRONTISPIECE

BY A. W. B. LINCOLN

New York and London

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
BOHEMIA INVADED.....	I
WEDDED BLISS.....	19
HIGH ETIQUETTE IN HARLEM.....	37
THE TALENT IN THE NAPKIN.....	53
A DINNER IN POVERTY FLAT.....	57
THE BETTER ELEMENT.....	73
THE SQUARER.....	81
THE JOKE THAT FAILED.....	97
DAN BRIORDY'S GITAWAY SHADDER...	105
THE WARDMAN'S WOOING.....	125
THE CHANGE OF THE LUCK.....	147
MR. SYNICK'S ANTI-BAD-BREAK.....	163
FREAKS AND KINGS.....	169

BOHEMIA INVADED.

THEY all say that if it had not been for my uncalled-for foolishness in bringing young Etchley down to the Garibaldi *table d'hôte* last winter, that exclusive and delightful *salon* would never have lost one iota of the prestige which it had enjoyed for fully a year previous to my entirely inexcusable and thoughtless act.

I believe that I have flitted through every *table d'hôte* that has reared its head in the town since the days of Martinelli, and I doubt if there has ever been one which equalled in point of exclusiveness and austere social tone the little 40-cent dinner which "Garibaldi," as we call him, his real

name being unpronounceable, serves every evening to his patrons in his snug little basement below Washington Square.

Everybody who is familiar with *table d'hôte* life knows that exclusiveness is possible only in those establishments where the dinner is served at a very low price. Half a dollar opens the doors to the common herd, and as for the dollar dinners they are completely given over to the Philistines who chop their spaghetti into a pulp and eat it with a spoon.

It is true that we "Garibaldians" are easily recognized by the white lint which comes off the tablecloths and napkins and sticks to our garments in such liberal quantities as to impart to us a sort of resemblance to a drove of Angora goats, but that is something that no one but a Philistine would ever complain of.

Now, a Philistine will not of his own

volition venture into one of the humble basements or cool back yards in which the artistic soul seeks refreshment. When he is lured into such a place he sniffs audibly and suspiciously, and when he learns that the dinner costs but 35 or 40 cents he wants to know why they keep the place so dirty and why that waiter doesn't bring the powdered sugar along with the lettuce.

But to return to Garibaldi's. For a long time a score of us had the big oval table to ourselves, and very pleasant indeed were the dinners we used to enjoy there. From my experience then I should say that the ideal *table d'hôte* company should be composed of the following ingredients in the proportions indicated: Art, plastic, pictorial and illustrative, 25 per cent.; letters, poesy, prosody, typewriting and journalism, 25 per cent.; the stage, lyric, protean and classic, 20 per cent.; Arctic explorers, tropical

travellers and illustrious exiles, 10 per cent.; ladies, bound by marital or other fragile ties to and usually escorted by atoms of the ingredients already named, 20 per cent.

The oval table held 15 comfortably, and by squeezing we could make room for 18, or even 20 if the last comers happened to stand well in our little commune.

It was into this Eden that I introduced Etchley one fateful night about six months ago, and it happened that we found but two vacant places—one at the lower end of the table, where half a dozen artists were congregated, and the other directly opposite and between two comedians.

I deposited my friend in the first named of the two places, and, having introduced him to his neighbors, left him to his own devices, confident that he would readily assimilate with those about him, for young Etchley

is well known in New York society as the "rising young artist," and has a rare collection of antiques and rugs on the walls and floor of the handsomely furnished room which he calls his "studio."

I remember very little of the conversation that went on about the table on the night of young Etchley's *début*, but I recall with vivid distinctness the reproachful howls which greeted me when I appeared in the Garibaldi the following evening.

"That was a nice sort of a duck you brought down here last night."

"What do you want to spoil a good crowd for by bringing in such fellows as that?"

I was thunderstruck and could only exclaim, "What's the matter with my friend? Wasn't he all right?"

"What's the matter with him!" cried Charley Clay indignantly. "He talked about the spontaneity of

art. That's what's the matter with him!"

A sudden understanding of what had happened the night before came upon me with crushing force, and the mere thought of the hideous enormity of my friend's offence caused me to sink, speechless, into a chair.

Now, you may search New York from one end to the other without finding a finer artist—for social purposes, I mean—than my accomplished young friend, Mr. Walter Etchley. His "studio teas," of which he gives at least three every season, are admitted by all whose privilege it is to attend them to be "most delightful affairs and so thoroughly Bohemian, you know," while his stock of art phrases in French, English and Italian is the envy of every connoisseur who ever said a word about "art for art's sake."

That Etchley was a *poseur* and an

adept in the use of kettledrum art talk was a fact well known to me, but that he would attempt to project any of his miserable balderdash about the *premier coup* and the "divine art of Velasquez" into a circle of artists of the kind who know how to draw never once entered my mind. However, the deed was done, and I thought it politic just then to call for refreshments and humbly ask my friends to forget and forgive.

But before the week was out Etchley appeared again on the scene, accompanied by two stock-brokers, who called for champagne and came near ruining Philippe, the waiter, for life, by giving him a tip of 35 cents.

A few days later other gentlemen of unmistakably commercial aspect bore down upon us, and it was not long before the olden charm of the Garibaldi had completely vanished.

The Philistines or "floor-walkers," as we called them, not only sat at our table, laughed at our jokes, forced themselves upon us under every possible pretext, but also whispered to one another about us, pointing us out as if we had been so many animals in a cage.

"That girl with the red hair used to be in the Casino chorus, and that fellow talking to her makes pictures for *Puck* and *Judge*. He was fearfully funny the other evening. There's another funny man over there; he does all those jokes in *Life* and *Truth*, and that girl next to him is a typewriter and just as bright as they make 'em. I tell you it's great fun to come here and see all the Bohemians; but somehow they're not as lively to-night as they generally are. Hulloo! There comes Johnny Roach, our linen buyer. Come over here, John. I guess these ladies and gents

will move up a bit so as to give you room."

Then there were those financial fleas who make a living by dashing through Wall and Broad Streets at a profit of a quarter of an eighth of a cent a jump.

What unhallowed bores those fellows are.

"The bottom's all out of Lackawanna, but Manhattan'll be up in a French roof before the week's out. Hear Charley Opdyke's latest? He said if Dickey Daredevil got too drunk to go the Union Club they'd have to bring the Union Club to him. Haw! haw! haw! haw! I tell you that's a great Charley. I'd oughter taken that tip he gave me yesterday and played Clothesrack one, two, three for the Van Dyke House Stakes, but instead of that I played Cough-drop, and I'll be hanged if I don't think the old plug is running yet!"

That was the sort of talk we were compelled to listen to, and it was with feelings of bitter humiliation that I realized that it was I who had spoiled the place by introducing Etchley.

Half a dozen of us were talking the matter over late one night, and discussing the advisability of moving in a body to some other *table d'hôte*, when Kitty Bracebridge, who had just returned from her tour with the "Merry Idlers" Company, remarked, "I suppose those people will fill the whole place up when Garibaldi gives us his birthday blowout next week. Do you remember what an elegant time we had last year all by ourselves? And maybe Billy Wells didn't get a jag though? Somehow he always gets loaded when the drinks are free. But say, boys, aren't you going to do something so we can have the place to ourselves, or at least our own table,

the night of the big blowout, or shall we all get here at five o'clock so as to keep our seats? There's a fearful drought here to-night, Charley. Can't you do something for us, or do you want to have me go out and pray for rain?"

"Of course they'll be here in full force then," growled Tony Steele, "but, by Jove!"—his face lit up suddenly, and his eyes flashed with excitement—"I've got a scheme to knock them out, and if you'll help me we'll put it through in great shape on Garibaldi's birthday."

"Help you? Well if it's a scheme to down those counter-jumpers we're with you every time. Let's have it without delay."

Garibaldi's little basement dining-room was swept and garnished in honor of the fête day, which he ob-

served every year by giving a free dinner to his patrons. As Kitty Bracebridge had predicted, the outsiders turned out in full force, and if we, the aboriginal settlers, had not taken the precaution of securing a table for ourselves at a very early hour, we should have found ourselves shut out completely. As it was, the mercantile contingent not only filled every other chair in the room, but cast anxious glances at those in which we sat, as if they grudged us possession of even the one stronghold that remained to us in what we had formerly regarded as our own exclusive territory.

Now, Garibaldi's has a back-yard—a tiny place, littered with old wine casks, bottles, jars, empty boxes, broken chairs and other rubbish of the sort that might be expected to accumulate about the kitchen door of an Italian restaurant. A window,

guarded with thick iron bars, opens from the yard to the dining-room and, except in bitter cold weather, is left open in deference to the Anglo-Saxon fondness for fresh air and in defiance of all established Latin customs.

But, although the dinner was free that night and the room was filled to its utmost capacity, we were not a particularly lively company, and at about half-past seven I heard from another part of the room: "I don't know what's the matter with those people to-night. Generally they're full of fun and get off a lot of jokes. That fellow with the long hair and the eyeglasses I was talking to you about hasn't shown up yet, but maybe he'll come later, and then you'll see some sport. He's an artist and fearfully funny. Why, just look there, will you! What the deuce does that mean?"

At the same moment I saw Tony

and Charley Clay peering in at us through the open yard window, with their faces flattened against the iron bars.

“I like this place because of the people you see here!” exclaimed Tony, in a loud voice, and a murmur of surprise, accompanied by a sudden moving of chairs and creaking of necks, ran through the room and was followed by a solemn hush, which was broken only by Tony, who continued in the most unconcerned way to point out to his friend the guests who were enjoying Garibaldi’s hospitality.

“Why, this place is fairly alive with commercial talent to-night,” he remarked, cheerfully. “If you want to get the kings of finance and the merchant princes together just set out a free feed, and they’ll come all the way from Yonkers for it. Do you see that man with the mayonnaise whiskers? You’d never think to look at him that

he holds a very responsible position in one of our largest retail emporiums. Well, he does all the same, and he's got as many as twenty cash-boys to answer to his beck and call. You can see at a glance that he was born to command, and yet he's perfectly unassuming and affable to everybody."

Mr. Garibaldi's guests looked at one another in amazement and then turned their eyes upon the unfortunate gentleman with the "mayonnaise whiskers," who at once rose from his chair and with a face that now wore a livelier hue than his hair, hastily withdrew, while some of his friends began to look for their overcoats and rubbers.

"There's Clara, too," cried Tony, excitedly, as his eye fell upon a tall, blonde youth, whose clothes had evidently been made to set off his long hair in an appropriate and harmonious fashion.

"He's just too dainty and sweet for

this part of the town. He's got a studio up town and the cunningest little brushes and paints that are all his own, and there's not one of the other girls that dares to touch them. And he makes the prettiest pictures you ever saw, too, for he's chock full of talent. All he wants is a *Figaro Illustré* and a little tracing paper, and he'll turn out some of the nicest pictures you ever saw in your life. But Clara won't be long with us, I'm afraid, because Garibaldi is going to catch and cook him some day and serve him up as an *entree* with tomato sauce. What! Going so soon. Clara? Well, good-night, but you needn't bang the door so loud."

There was some merriment at our table as the "gifted young society illustrator," as the fashion writers usually call him, beat a hasty retreat, and then the irrepressible Tony proceeded :

“There’s another man there that I want you to notice,” he continued in a loud voice as he thrust a long arm through the bars and pointed, with impressive skinny forefinger, at one of the financiers who was trying to escape unobserved: “that man has been hanging to the curbstone of Broad Street so long that his feet have turned into claws and he can perch over the limb of a tree just as if he were a crow or a pigeon. Vanderbilt gets all his points from that man, because he is one of the kings of finance. He knows what it is to make as high as \$4.83 a day when he’s on the right side of the market. I tell you, old man, there’s no place in town where you can meet as many solid men as you can right here, and I’m sorry they’re all going away so early, because I’d like to have you see more of them.”

The Philistines were going, there was no mistake about it, and the

snicker which had gone round our table, changed to a roar in which even the Italian contingent at the table nearest the stove joined heartily as the last "floor-walker" vanished through the door.

And then Tony and Charley Clay came in from the little back-yard and sat down with us at our own table, and we feasted and drank until far into the morning, and from that day to this no Philistine has ever presumed to show his face in Garibaldi's.

WEDDED BLISS.

I REMEMBER now that when, as a small boy, I learned in our history class of that Athenian who proved his fitness for the ballot by voting for the banishment of Aristides, I instantly thought of Herbert Preston. At that time he always kept his face and hands clean and his hair combed, and it was at that time that my female relations began a practice, which they have kept up to the present day, of continually holding him up to me as a young man whose example was to be followed by reprobates like myself. And this long-drawn-out praise culminated in a burst of enthusiasm when Herbert, at the age of twenty-

three, made what they all declared was "a most judicious and desirable marriage."

"There's a fine young man for you!" exclaimed my worthy Aunt Susan; "he's married a good girl, a domestic girl, and a girl who will make him happy and keep him in the right path, too. Besides that she's got \$5,000 a year in her own right, and will have more some day if she keeps on the right side of the old lady—which she knows enough to do, being a girl of high principle—and I must say, James, that I wish you would follow your friend's example and settle down instead of living the way you do—Heaven knows how or where."

It was six years after this that I next met Herbert Preston, and then I accepted his invitation to spend Sunday at his house in Westchester county, if only to contrast my sorrow-

ful bachelor state with the sunshine of a home to which the wife brings \$5,000 a year, is looking for more when her mother dies, and continues meantime to keep her husband in the right path and make him happy too.

It was dark when I alighted from the train the following Saturday afternoon, but Herbert was waiting for me at the depot, and we started together to walk to his house, a quarter of a mile away.

"Here we are," said Preston cheerily, as he opened the front door with his night-key and ushered me into the house. "I guess Mrs. Preston's upstairs with the baby. Just step into the dining-room a minute," and I followed him with alacrity.

Now when, at the end of a long and cold journey on a winter's evening, a man invites a friend to "step into the dining-room," he can have but one purpose in view. At least that is the

way I reasoned then, as I dropped my bag in the hall and followed Herbert over the threshold into a region of cavernous darkness.

"Sit down," said my host in a pleasant, genial way, and I did so, smacking my lips while he lit the gas. "Just wait here a moment while I go up and see if your room is ready. I'd take you in the parlor, but the children's toys are all over the floor," and with these words he disappeared, leaving me there to study my new surroundings.

I glanced about the room and a terrible suspicion came upon me. No implements of hospitality were visible, but on the wall hung a temperance motto worked in red worsted on white cardboard, and beside it an illuminated certificate of membership in the Order of the Sons of the Crystal Fount, while on the sideboard stood a flat bottle with a rubber tube

attachment—one of those noisome domestic objects which ought to be kept in a dark room like a sensitized photographic plate.

It was after seven when Mrs. Preston appeared upon the scene to welcome me. She was a fairly good-looking woman, with serious dark eyes, set rather close together in her head, and suggesting, in fact, almost betraying, her complete lack of humorous sense, while certain lines about the corners of her mouth indicated Calvinistic severity and thrift.

As she shook my hand she remarked carelessly that baby had been so cunning and sweet that night that she had played with him an hour longer than she usually did. Then we sat down at table and Mrs. Preston asked a blessing which we didn't get.

Now I am a bit of a philosopher in my way, and whenever I find myself in an uncomfortable position I always

try to turn the situation to some profitable account instead of yielding to the melancholy of the occasion. Therefore I said to myself:—"I will strive to make myself agreeable to this woman, who appears to have fewer interests in the world than anybody I have ever met. I do not wish to break up this happy five-thousand-a-year home, but if I can win this one's heart no woman will be able to resist me, and henceforth the boundless continent will be mine—that is to say, so far as the gentler sex is concerned." Therefore, as soon as dinner was over and we were all seated in the parlor, I sprang to my task with renewed vivacity.

Grasping the conversational oar firmly in both hands and bracing myself firmly in my seat, I asked her if she had read Mr. Howells' last novel. No, she did not think she had. She did not read novels. Did she like

Mr. Irving as well as Mr. Booth? She gaped at me a moment and then inquired if Irving was not a play-actor. No, she did not approve of going to the theatre.

At this juncture I almost lost my stroke by pausing to ask her why she did not approve of theatres. She replied, after a moment's hesitation, that it was because she had never been to one herself. From which it will be seen that Mrs. Preston possessed a logical and well-balanced mind.

Having passed literature and the drama in a few swift strokes, I wiped my forehead and turned my prow toward the safe and placid shoals of society, where I judged I should find easy paddling.

Was there much good society in the town? Yes, indeed, there was a very pleasant social circle, composed exclusively of the members of Dr.

Dillar's First Congregational Church, to which, fortunately enough, the Preston family belonged. Her mother, she added, had gone out to visit one of these desirable families that composed the congregation, and she expected her back every moment. In fact, she was only sitting up on her account, for she usually went upstairs soon after eight. She smiled in an agreeable manner, and then a tramping and clattering on the piazza denoted the old lady's return, and Herbert flew with suspicious alacrity to open the door.

I recognized her the moment I saw her—the ideal mother-in-law of humorous fiction—for, back in the early seventies I was one of a small and devoted band of paragraphers who were engaged in holding her up to the delighted gaze of the American public.

I had made many a dollar out of

her in the old days, but it was the first time I had ever seen her in the flesh. She was even more severe of aspect than her daughter, and the hand which she extended to me was cold and heavy and lifeless, like a bar of lead. In memory of the old days of "acrobatic" humor and with a lively sense of gratitude for the money she used to put into my flat purse, I endeavored respectfully to draw her into conversation. But she was not responsive, and I was not sorry when she and her daughter departed for the upper regions.

Soon afterward Herbert returned and remarked that he usually "retired" at nine o'clock. I took the hint and observed that my customary bedtime was half-past eight, so we went upstairs together.

Now I don't want to be put down as a crusty old bachelor, nor do I wish to appear in the light of one

despising and ridiculing the domestic hearthstone and hating little children. On the contrary, I am very fond of little children, and, when I was awakened shortly before daybreak by a screaming chorus in the nursery next to me, I felt sorry for the youngsters who were getting such a bad bringing up.

As I lay in my bed, unable to sleep because of the awful racket, I comforted myself grimly by thinking of all the pleasant and beautiful things that the Prestons were missing in this world by reason of what they are fond of terming their "principles," and their squalid custom of keeping early hours, a practice of which I have always seriously disapproved.

And then my thoughts roamed off to the numberless good times that I have enjoyed in this vale of tears, and I chuckled as I thought how many of them I would have missed had I in

early life cultivated the pernicious habit of going to bed early.

Then I sank into an uneasy slumber, and dreamed that I had become truly good myself, and that the bells were beginning to toll for my marriage to Mrs. Preston's younger sister, and then I awoke and found that it was the rising bell which I had heard, and I arose, greatly relieved, and proceeded to dress.

The three children sat opposite to me at breakfast, and bright, lively, and vigorous specimens of humanity they were, too. I must say, however, that a fistful of oatmeal mush hurled across the table by an excited infant is apt to prove a formidable projectile, as I discovered to my cost that morning. It was Master Herbert, junior, who performed this feat in a sudden gust of fury, caused by his mother's putting the sugar-bowl out of his reach.

"My darling," said Mrs. Preston at

this exploit, "you must remember that it is Sunday, and God won't love you if you make so much noise to-day."

"I don't want God to love me! Gimme that sugar-bowl!" howled the child, and he had his way.

As it was Sunday the children were not allowed to play with their toys, so they kept the day holy by screaming for them and quarrelling with each other and with the nurse until the church bells began to ring, and the mother-in-law asked us rather pointedly if we were ready for church. I replied with alacrity that I was, and joyfully closed a volume on the conversion of the Jews which I had been reading at her suggestion. We sallied forth, and entered the church in a procession headed by Herbert, who escorted his mother-in-law with a meekness and deference that must have made it apparent to the entire

congregation that there was still some property in the family to divide. Mrs. Preston and I followed, and the nurse and eldest child brought up the rear.

When the parson announced his text, Master Herbert, who had behaved like a fried snake up to that moment, was carried out, and I leaned back in the corner of the pew, prepared to be bored. But I was not bored. On the contrary, I listened to one of the very best sermons I had ever heard in my life—and one that applied perfectly to my own condition.

He preached about the virtue of patience under affliction, and reminded us of the fact that the ills of this life, no matter how hard they might be to bear, were visited upon us for our own good, and that it was our duty to derive benefit from them whenever we could.

I was introduced to the preacher after church and contrived to tell him

in an undertone how much I had enjoyed his sermon, adding that I really believed that it had given me new strength to endure the troubles which beset me.

“Indeed,” said the clergyman, assuming his professional “sympathetic” look, and preparing to escape, for I suppose the poor man had enough to bore him within his own congregation and could not extend his practice among outside sinners.

“Yes,” I replied meekly, “we all have our trials in this vale of tears, and now I am staying over Sunday with the Prestons.”

A broad and singularly winning and humorous smile chased the sympathetic look from the preacher’s face and told me that our sentiments were in accord. “I see that Mrs. Preston’s mother is still with them,” he said quietly, but I thought meaningly, and then we both laughed and shook

hands cordially, and I thought what a hard time he must be having in that church.

After dinner Herbert and I went out for a walk, by special permission of Mrs. Preston, and I took particularly good care to stay out until tea-time, for I needed all possible strength and refreshment for the work which lay before me that evening. I had determined—even if it became necessary to sit up all night—to make a favorable impression on the Prestons, and I felt that to do that I must surpass all my previous records as a man of tact and a fascinating talker.

I took my text from the motto on the dining-room wall, and, as soon as we had adjourned to the parlor, made inquiries concerning the local temperance society.

This aroused the old lady, and she told me that the local branch had accomplished a great deal of good

and was in a very flourishing condition. For the past six months it had devoted its entire energies to the task of inducing Dr. Dillar, the clergyman whom we had heard that morning, to have none but teetotalers in the Board of Trustees. So successful had they been in this righteous crusade that they had already caused a serious split in the church—a split which might eventually drive Dr. Dillar from the pulpit and some of his supporters from the congregation.

Of course I congratulated Mrs. Preston and her mother on the amount of good they were accomplishing, and observed sadly that it had often pained me to see deacons and trustees of churches reeling down the fashionable thoroughfares of the city and falling down the steps of the chief places of worship.

It became apparent to me now that I was making a most excellent impres-

sion on the company, so I went on to say in a mysterious whisper, that I happened to know of the existence of a gigantic conspiracy to restore the Tweed ring to New York and remove the Vatican, Pope and all, from Rome to Milwaukee, Wis.

To all this the Preston family listened eagerly, but their faces positively beamed with delight when I went on to describe in a vivid, blood-curdling manner the iniquities practised by Roman Catholics and Unitarians—it's always safe to pitch into the members of either of those sects—and concluded with a magnificent peroration, in which I declared that we ought to be thankful that we were not like others—in darkness and sin—but enlightened and liberal Christians who could do no wrong. Then I saw by the delight that beamed on me from every eye that the field was won. And, indeed, the next morning on the

train Herbert told me that his wife and his mother-in-law were very much pleased with me. He also added rather significantly that Mrs. Preston had an unmarried sister with five thousand a year in her own right and a chance at the old lady's estate.

Is that so? Well, I have an enemy who has often done me wrong and who wishes to make a good match. If I could only bring those two together!

HIGH ETIQUETTE IN HARLEM.

“ Now I want you to remember that these are very elegant people we're going to call on to-night, even if they do live in a little Harlem flat. Their father was worth half a million, but he lost all his money, and so, of course, they don't get around among the four hundred as they used to. But their manners are just as high-toned and elegant as they ever were, and, what's more, nobody can catch on there unless his deportment is gilt-edged. If you've got a pair of gloves about you, you'd better draw one of them on and hold the other in your hand. It's best to look as genteel as you possibly can.”

38 High Etiquette in Harlem.

It was Mr. Job Pincheck who addressed these words to me as we alighted from one of the upper stations of the elevated railroad and started down a cross street in which dwelt the once wealthy and always high-toned family to whom I was to be introduced by Mr. Pincheck. The hint on the subject of gloves I acted upon promptly, and the inference conveyed in the delicate emphasis on the word "look" I accepted with becoming meekness, for was not Mr. Pincheck an authority on all matters of fashion and etiquette? And is there any social circle on the face of the earth where Etiquette—yes, with a big E—rules with such an arbitrary sway as it does in those adorned by Mr. Pincheck and people of his class?

I am sure that if the Orleans princes were to be introduced into the society of which Mr. Pincheck is a shining light they would be voted dis-

tinctly low and devoid of elegance and "style."

In offering to present me to this coterie of gifted and charming people to which he has long enjoyed the *entrée*, Mr. Pincheck paid me a high honor, and I was visibly conscious of it. I was conscious of it myself, and realized, with deep humility, that I was sadly lacking in the essential qualifications of a society favorite of the Pincheck type. So I resolved to watch my friend closely and learn the real cause of his phenomenal popularity.

It was Mrs. De Cay herself who admitted us to the little front parlor of the apartment in which she and her daughters dwelt. A meek, faded, little woman, with a false front of brown hair and a perpetual smirk, she greeted us with elaborate courtesy, apologized for opening the door in person—a formula, by the way, which

must never be omitted in the society of which I am treating—then asked us to be seated while she went in search of her daughters.

No sooner had she disappeared into the region of cavernous darkness, whence issued the sound as of the furtive washing of muffled dishes, than Mr. Pincheck tip toed over to the looking-glass and, after leering at himself complacently, took a small comb from his vest pocket and, with the aid of that instrument and his own long and bony fingers, proceeded to claw his coarse, reddish hair into a fantastic feathery shape, which made me blush for my own sparse, straight locks. His toilet finished, he bestowed upon me a critical glance, conjured me to not forget that real elegance and style were the distinguishing traits of the family whom I was to meet, then had just time to hurl himself into the nearest chair

when the door opened and Mrs. De Cay entered the room, followed by her two daughters, to whom I was presented with an elaborate degree of pomp and ceremony.

Of course we both rose at the entrance of the ladies, while Mr. Pincheck's features broke into a smile of winning sweetness and I grinned as pleasantly as I could, and bowed fully as low as did my companion. The elder Miss De Cay said she was "pleased to meet me;" the younger Miss De Cay said, "Won't you be seated? Let me take your hats, please," thus obeying one of the first laws of fashion prevailing in that grade of society. As for Mrs. De Cay, she smiled weakly upon us, and hoped we would make ourselves quite at home.

Then we all sat down, I in a red plush arm-chair, and Mr. Pincheck on the other side of the room, with

a young lady on either side of him. I was led to suspect that he chose this position so that he might have an excuse for saying something about "a thorn between two roses," for he speedily enunciated that novel bit of pleasantry, accompanying it with an inane chuckle which woke an answering titter from the ladies, and then the elder Miss De Cay tapped him playfully with her fan and said, "Always so quick at repartee, Mr. Pincheck! We're positively afraid to open our mouths while you're here."

It was just at this moment that Mrs. De Cay, who had been feebly leering at us from a low rocking-chair, arose, and with an apologetic murmur disappeared into the dark depths whence she had come.

All eyes, including my own, were now fixed on the irresistible Mr. Pincheck, who had become metamorphosed into something between a

barber's assistant of the simian type and a jumping-jack. His face was wreathed with smiles, he bowed to the right and the left as he murmured compliments in the ears of the two young girls, and as for his language, it seemed to suddenly blossom out with a crop of long words and elegant sentences, such as I had never heard him use before.

The fact was Mr. Pincheck had on his society manners and was "showing off," with the view of dazzling the company with his brilliancy and letting me know, incidentally, that he held a social trick or so in reserve that could be played whenever occasion demanded it. I am sure he made a tremendous impression on all of us, for the young ladies giggled and laughed and said, "Get away, now!" incessantly, while I sat literally spell-bound with admiration at his ease of manner and steady flow of idiocy.

44 High Etiquette in Harlem.

"Oh, Mr. Pincheck," cried the younger Miss De Cay, "we really must do something to stop your mouth; I never saw you in such a wicked, satirical mood as you are to-night. There! Take some of the caramels, and don't make us all laugh any more this evening."

"No, thanks," exclaimed Mr. Pincheck, with a captivating bow, "there's such a profusion of sweetness here already that I really could not think of eating any candy."

As he said this he cast a languishing glance at the younger Miss De Cay, to which she responded, looking at him over the top of her fan, "I don't believe you mean what you say half the time."

"Ah, how cruel you are, Miss Mamie," returned the other, rising from his seat and taking his hat from the piano, "but once in a while I mean what I say, so if you'll just ex-

cuse me a moment I'll prove to you that sometimes my deeds are better than my words," and to my great astonishment he withdrew, taking with him a richly ornamented pitcher which I had noticed standing rather conspicuously on the centre table.

No sooner had the door closed behind him than the young ladies burst into pæans of praise, declaring that of all their gentlemen friends who visited them there was none to compare in elegance of diction, refinement of manner or quickness of repartee with Mr. Job Pincheck.

"And what I like most about him," exclaimed the elder Miss De Cay, "is that there's nothing common about him. Every action you see him make is refined. Just look at how elegant he took the pitcher and stepped out. Not a word about chasing the duck or rolling the rock, nor any of them fearful low expressions."

46 High Etiquette in Harlem.

“Yes indeed,” chimed in her sister, “it’s easy to see that Mr. Pincheck’s been used to good society. Very different from that Mr. Polkadot, who came here once or twice, and used such common, slang terms that we were all mortified to death. Why, one night he was here, and we had two young lady friends visiting us. And what do you think he said? He turned to me as cool as you please and said, ‘Let’s get together ten cents and push the can.’ Well, I never was so ashamed in all my life. I just turned to him and says, very quiet and very sarcastical, ‘Mr. Polkadot, when the time comes that we have to take up a collection for a pitcher of beer I’ll pass the hat myself.’ But it’s very seldom any of our gentlemen friends calls here without the price of a pint in their pockets.”

“Yes, and you ought to have seen

the way Mamie looked when she said it to him," exclaimed the elder Miss De Cay. "But you'll never hear a real gentleman like Mr. Pincheck say anything like that. With him it's generally, 'Perhaps these ladies will partake of some refreshments,' and then pour it out without making any remarks about the collar on it."

At this moment the subject of this glowing eulogy re-entered the parlor and placed on the centre table the pitcher, which was now full of beer. Glasses were produced by the younger Miss De Cay, and the cheering beverage was gracefully and speedily served by the engaging Pincheck.

I now determined to establish myself by one bold *coup* in the esteem and affection of the family, and as the beer began to run low, and finally ceased altogether, I arose, took my hat and the richly decorated pitcher, and withdrew from the scene with a

pleasant smile and a bow, which I felt sure must have their effect.

“Leave the door open so you can see, and mind the broken rail,” called the younger Miss De Cay, as I groped my way down the dark staircase.

“I’ll light a match!” exclaimed Mr. Pincheck, following me out into the hall and whispering:—“On the middle of the block above; a little Dutch place across the street: you can’t miss it. And while you are about it you might as well get a quart; it’ll last longer.”

Following these instructions I found the “little Dutch place” indicated by Mr. Pincheck, had the pitcher filled to the brim with foaming beer, and then bent my steps toward the De Cay tenement.

As I walked I reflected upon my good fortune in having, through my friend’s kindness, obtained the *entrée* to a circle in which elegance and

true refinement were the guiding stars. With the adorable Mr. Pincheck to copy and learn from I felt certain that in a very short time I could become a veritable ornament to the society into which I had been introduced.

Occupied with these pleasant reflections, I entered the dark hallway of the apartment house and began the toilsome ascent to the third floor. I climbed slowly and paused for breath at the foot of the last flight. The door of the De Cay apartment was still open and the sound of voices reached my ear. And this is what I heard:—

Mr. Pincheck—Well. I'm afraid it's no use trying to make a society man out of him. I've had him out once before, but he didn't catch on at all. He just saved himself this time by going out for the beer, but I don't think I'll try it with him again. The

50 **High Etiquette in Harlem.**

poor chap means well, but he hain't got no style.

Elder Miss De Cay—Well, anyway, Mr. Pincheck, he ain't so bad as that fearful Polkadot, with his low, common expressions.

Younger Miss De Cay—Oh, mercy, no; nothing half so awful as that man was. The only trouble with this one is that you can see at once he hain't never been in no society to speak of. He hain't had the advantages you have, Mr. Pincheck, and I'm sure if he was to go about oftener with you he'd improve a great deal.

Mr. Pincheck (and I knew he was shaking his head sadly)—No use, I'm afraid; he hain't got society in his blood, and he won't never be any good. Hush! here he comes up the stairs. (A moment later)—Well, old man, back again? Pretty tough climbing for a fat man like you.

High Etiquette in Harlem. 51

Just go to the glass and look at your cheeks.

Since that evening I have given up trying to shine in a circle for which Nature never intended me.

THE TALENT IN THE NAPKIN.

Now a certain man who was about to journey into a far country called his brokers unto him and gave unto one of them five talents, unto another two and unto the third one talent, and bade them go forth and operate during his absence.

And after a time the customer returned and, calling his brokers around him, said unto the one to whom he had given the five talents: "Where is the money I entrusted to you?"

And the broker replied: "My lord, I went short on Western Union and long on Omaha until the five

54 **The Talent in the Napkin.**

talents became ten talents, and then——”

“And then?” exclaimed the rich man.

“And then the commissions ate it all up,” responded the broker, placidly.

“I am glad,” observed the customer, “that you did not go any longer on Omaha, because if you had there is no telling how much the commissions would have devoured besides the ten talents. And you,” he continued, addressing the second broker, “where are the two talents which I gave unto you?”

“I put them into puts and calls until they became four talents, and then——”

“And then?” cried the rich man, hopefully.

“And then they were called for,” was the rejoinder.

“And you,” said the customer,

sadly, turning to the third broker, "where is the single talent which I left with you?"

And the broker straightway replied: "My lord, I knew that you were an unreasonable man and desired to reap where you had sown, so I hid the talent in a napkin, so that you might have it again on your return. Here it is."

"Is it possible that I have got something back?" cried the delighted customer. "I am glad that you did not place it in a bank——"

"No, I have been a bank director myself," said the broker.

And then the rich man knew that the broker was a great financier and he gave him all his business, so that he entered into the joy and pocket-book of his customer.

A DINNER IN POVERTY FLAT.

“FIFTH FLOOR; you can’t miss it, because there is a dispossess notice stuck on the door!” and with a cheerful salute, my friend, Mr. William Buskin, bounded to the front platform of a passing horse-car, and left me standing on the curb, fully committed to take dinner with him in Poverty Flat the following Sunday.

It was the middle of a hot summer. My friend Buskin and salary had been strangers to one another for two months to my certain knowledge, and the chance of renewing the acquaintance for two months to come was very slender. He lived with two

58 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

or three friends, as needy as himself, in a small flat west of Sixth Avenue. The apartment in which the thespians dwelt was situated in a tall building called the Gilt-Edge, which also sheltered a large number of ladies and gentlemen identified with Literature, Art, Music, and the Drama. By reason of the jovial proclivities of most of the tenants, their proficiency in vocal and instrumental music, and the number of pianos and violins maintained on the premises, the Gilt-Edge Apartment House was frequently on summer evenings the fountainhead of mirth and melody, and a noteworthy feature of the block on which it stood.

I could not for the life of me, comprehend how Mr. Buskin, with nothing in his pockets but the dollar I had just lent him, and with a dispossess notice hanging on the outer walls of his abode, could have the

hardihood to give a dinner-party; but, then, his was one of those bright volatile natures that are never cast down by adverse circumstances; so I simply gave up wondering, and made up my mind to accept the invitation, and to hope for the best.

When I entered the Gilt-Edge Apartment House on Sunday afternoon, I found that building completely given over to the Muses. It seemed to me, as I clambered slowly upstairs, that there was a farce-comedy company rehearsing in every room. The vibrant melody of the banjo filled the second floor; the occupants of the floor above were uniting their forces in a terrific song and dance; while the fourth floor fairly rang with the discordant notes of the piano and a violin, blending with half a dozen voices in "Comrades." On the fifth floor I easily found the door with the dispossess

60 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

notice, knocked on it, and was admitted to Poverty Flat.

“Glad to see you, old man !” cried Mr. Buskin, taking his heels off the table, and grasping me cordially by the hand. “Step right in, and let me introduce you to my old friend Horatio Rungdown, my first manager, who is staying with us for a few days ; and this is Charley Props, who was out with us last season.”

Mr. Rungdown, a smooth-shaven gentleman of advanced years, arose and greeted me with punctilious courtesy. His eyes were bright, his linen clean but frayed, and his black coat buttoned tightly across his breast. He impressed me, somehow, as being in straitened circumstances, and yet he carried himself with an air of martial dignity that was imposing, to say the least.

“I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir,” he said in tones of mingled

dignity and deference. "I am under very great obligations to the Press for its hearty recognition of my efforts from the very moment of my arrival in this country, forty years ago. In fact, sir, if it had not been for the generous treatment accorded me by the American Press, I doubt if I ever would have reached the place in my profession which I can now call my own: and during my career of forty years in this country, playing a wide range of parts, from the humblest to the highest, I have never denied that it is the enlightened and discerning critics who have made me what I am."

At the conclusion of this address—delivered as if it had been accompanied by the freedom of the City of London—Mr. Rungdown resumed his chair, and took up the work on which he had been engaged when I entered. That was tying a large steel fork securely to the end of a long pole.

62 **A Dinner in Poverty Flat.**

Mr. Props, who had been gazing intently out at the window, as if watching for some one, nodded pleasantly to me without relaxing his vigilance. Nor did he turn his head when, at the close of Mr. Rungdown's harangue, he remarked :

“ Billy, hadn't you better offer your friend something to drink ? It's dry work listening, such weather as this.”

While Mr. Buskin was rummaging in some far-away closet for a clean glass, I saw Mr. Props suddenly leave his post by the window, tip-toe out into the hall, and then suspend himself head-down in a listening attitude over the balusters. As he re-entered the room a moment later, Mr. Rungdown looked up from his work inquiringly, and the other nodded.

“ Hurry up, Billy ! ” he called to his friend, who was now looking for

the whisky bottle ; "the coast's all clear, they've both gone out."

"Perhaps," suggested Mr. Rungdown, "your friend would like to go into the front parlor, and entertain himself with the books and engravings while we prepare the repast."

This apparently commonplace remark threw the others into convulsions of laughter, on their recovery from which my friend Buskin said :

"The fact is, my dear boy, we shall need your assistance not only in preparing the repast, but in procuring it; and, besides, I doubt if the books and engravings in the front parlor would interest you as much as the study of still life that you can obtain at the rear end of the apartment. You must remember that you are now in Poverty Flat, where the meals at this time of the year are seldom, and are obtained, when obtained, by the most artistic hustling imagin-

64 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

able. Is that fork all right, Rung-down?"

The fork was all right, and Mr. Props called me to the window, which opened on a wide, light air-shaft, and pointed downward to the window of the opposite apartment on the floor below. 'This window, like ours, was open, and just inside it stood a good-sized ice-chest.

"That box," said Mr. Props, dramatically, "contains our dinner, and we've got just ten minutes to get it in. Billy, give me that spear, and all of you take hold of me, and see to it that I don't fall."

He leaned far out over the window-ledge, while we grasped him by the legs and ankles, and held on for dear life—that is to say, *his* dear life—and our dinners. By a quick lunge of the pole the fork was embedded in the lid of the ice chest, and as quickly pulled back, leaving the chest open,

and revealing a feast which brightened the eyes and quickened the pulses of old Mr. Rungdown in a way that was almost pathetic.

“I say, Charley!” cried the old man, “you’d better make sure of that beefsteak the first thing you do. That’s too good a thing to be missed.”

It was a magnificent-looking steak, to be sure; and beside it were half a peck of sweet potatoes, half a dozen huge Spanish onions, two pine-apples, and any number of bottles of beer. Charley “made sure of” the beefsteak with one fell swoop of the steel prongs, and I know I almost yelled with delight as old Rungdown seized it with trembling fingers, and hauled it in over the window-sill. “The onions next, my boy!” exclaimed the worthy histrion; “they go beautifully with a steak like that;” and up came the onions one after

66 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

another, followed quickly by the sweet potatoes and pine-apples. Then Mr. Props hauled himself in, black in the face from his exertions while suspended in mid-air. "It's your turn now, Billy," he gasped, as he sank into a chair; "you're the lasso expert in the crowd."

Mr. Buskin therefore took his stand at the window with a long piece of twine in his hand, and, making a slip-noose at one end, deftly guided it by aid of the pole to a snug position round the neck of one of the beer bottles, and a moment later it was drawn up and added to the recently acquired larder.

Meantime Mr. Rungdown had not been idle. No longer needed as a sheet anchor to the piratical Mr. Props, he had busied himself in the little kitchen, and now the smoke that filled the whole apartment told us that he had succeeded in lighting a

fire in the range. Mr. Rungdown, to do him justice, always strove to make his "visits" as agreeable to his host and fellow-guests as he possibly could, by lending a hand at the stove or following the precarious chase of food with a skill and zest that were really remarkable in one of his age.

And now, the fire having been induced to burn lustily and cheerily, Mr. Rungdown proceeded to the table, going about the task with a stately dignity befitting an impersonation of *Julius Cæsar*. The last bottle of beer having been drawn up, the lid of the ice-chest was closed by Mr. Buskin, and we all set to work to prepare the dinner. The sweet potatoes were embedded in the hot embers and the onions placed in a stew-pan. The steak, the *pièce de résistance* of the banquet, was entrusted to Mr. Rungdown, the most accomplished cook in the company, and appetizing odors

68 **A Dinner in Poverty Flat.**

presently began to pervade the room.

It was Mr. Rungdown, himself, who gave us the signal to begin by depositing the steak on a well-heated platter, and placing it in the centre of the table with the remark: "Now, gentlemen, if you will take your places and divide the steak into four equal portions, I will rake out the other delicacies from the ashes."

"I tell you what it is," said Mr. Props, gravely, as he marked the thick, juicy piece of meat for dissection, "it's lucky our neighbors downstairs have not only the means, but the good taste, as well, to provide us with such an excellent repast. Now, just look at this steak—juicy, tender and cut thick, as it ought to be. I tell you it pays to get the best when you're out marketing."

"Especially when you do your marketing with a lasso and a spear,"

remarked Mr. Buskin, whereat we all laughed uproariously. We could well afford to, with the odor of the steak ascending to our nostrils, and Mr. Rung-down dishing the onions and sweet potatoes with his usual adroitness.

The meal progressed merrily, and just as we reached the dessert the door opened and in walked a gentleman with a high silk hat, a heavy moustache, a gaudy waistcoat and a look of annoyance on his face.

From the alacrity and deference with which my hosts rose to greet him I concluded that he must be a person of considerable importance in their immediate circle.

“Sit down, Mr. Dates!” exclaimed Charley, with smiling cordiality; “I hope you’ve come to see us about that engagement. Well, we’re just ready to sign with you for next season, and very glad——”

“Engagement be blowed!” ex-

70 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

claimed Mr. Dates, testily ; “ I want to know what sort of a place this Gilt-Edge Apartment is, anyhow. My wife and I just moved in yesterday down on the floor below. Stepped out for a little walk this afternoon, and took care to lock the door behind us. Had our dinner put carefully away in the ice-chest, fine beef-steak——”

Just at this point Mr. Dates stopped, for his glance had fallen upon Mr. Rungdown who, in the most natural and careless way in the world, was conveying two large pine-apples from the table to his lap.

I felt a cold chill run down my back as the manager advanced to the table—just as Mr. Rungdown disappeared under it in the most easy and graceful manner imaginable—picked up the pole with the fork lashed to it, and then cast an awful, withering glance about our little group.

"So that's the way you get your dinners, is it?" he exclaimed, while his face turned almost white, and Mr. Props and I mentally calculated our chances of getting past him and through the door, in case of necessity.

"Yes," he continued, glancing at the window, "you have an excellent location here for doing your marketing. I guess I'll get a ham, myself," and he made a violent lunge at Mr. Buskin. The actor avoided the spear-thrust, and the fork was imbedded in the wall. Before the manager could extricate it, Mr. Props had opened the door, and all three of us were out on the landing. As we sped down the stairs, I glanced between the rails and caught a glimpse of Mr. Dates plunging his spear under the table; but when we reached the street, a cheerful shout revealed the aged Rungdown, who, with a nimbleness

72 A Dinner in Poverty Flat.

which must have been the fruit of long experience, was descending the fire-escape, where the irate manager dared not follow him.

I will mention, in conclusion, the fact that not one of my friends was engaged to go out that season under the management of Mr. Augustus Dates.

THE BETTER ELEMENT.

OVER on the east side of the town, in the populous region which lies a little to the north of Cherry Hill, and within hearing of the roar and rumble of the Second and Third Avenue Elevated Railroads, stands a building which has sheltered beneath its roof many of the greatest statesmen in the city, and which, during those autumn days when the political cauldron is seething and bubbling, is the Mecca toward which are forever turned the eyes of those who wish to sell tickets for clambakes, to get advertisements for ball programmes, or to obtain for a brother, a father, or a cousin a job

in the Custom House, on the big pipes, or perhaps only on a broom.

Far and wide through the land this building is celebrated as the saloon of William (better known as "Ash Barrel") Snyder; and at the moment of which I write, three men, each one a power in local statecraft, were seated in the private room of the saloon, engaged in a discussion of weighty political matters.

The host was a small, wiry man of German extraction and New York bringing up, who owed his sobriquet to the bill which he once introduced in the Assembly at a critical moment in his career, and which served to attach to him at once the votes of hundreds of his old-time followers who were at that moment wavering in their allegiance.

This bill, which gave him the pseudonym which he has ever since borne, was one well-calculated to

awaken the enthusiasm of the laboring classes. It made it a felony for any city contractor to allow an ash barrel, either full or empty, to be moved unless at least three citizens and voters had hold of it at the same time.

The other men in the party were Elisha (better known as "Sewer Job") Dusenbury, and Patrick (commonly called "St. Patrick") Moriarty. The former owed his name and a great part of his fame to his immortal measure in behalf of the downtrodden workingmen of New York—a bill which provided for the taking up and reversing of every gas and water main in the city. Mr. Moriarty's chief claim to popular notice was based on his famous amendment to Mr. Dusenbury's sewer bill, and which made it a misdemeanor to sell oranges on the route of the St. Patrick's Day parade on the seventeenth of March. The

three statesmen were seated about a round table, on which stood glasses, sugar, and one or two corpulent bottles, when the door opened and a stranger entered and closed it behind him. Throwing aside the heavy ulster in which he was muffled, he advanced to the table and held out his hand. The three men leaped to their feet and gave him a hearty welcome.

“Sit down, sir!” cried Mr. Snyder; “and if it is not against your principles, join us in a drink.”

“I don’t care if I do have something,” replied the visitor. “For, although you gentlemen well know it is against my public principles, as expressed in the halls of legislation, to drink anything stronger than water, still it’s not against my private New York principles.”

The presence of the newcomer at the same table with the three men with whom he was apparently on

familiar terms was a realization of the old saying, "Politics makes strange bedfellows." He was a young man of not much more than thirty, with a clear-cut, intelligent face, and it was evident from his well-groomed appearance that he belonged to what his companions would have called "the swallow-tail crowd."

"And what brings you here to-night?" inquired Mr. Moriarty, as their glasses clinked.

"I came here to get advice from you gentlemen, for I am sure that after pulling together as well as we have for the last two or three years you are the best men I can go to for friendly counsel."

"Right you are!" cried Mr. Snyder. "If it wasn't for you I do not know how we would have been able to get through the last session. It is not every year that the Brownstone District sends up a man like

you. There was that scallawag of a Straightcut that was in Albany five years ago. He not only wouldn't take anything for his vote himself, but he was always pounding them as did. Now, of course, you never got anything for your vote—no more than the rest of us did, for that matter—but, then, I never knew you to raise a word to make it unpleasant for any one who needed a thousand-dollar note and took it where it would be the least missed. But what can we do for you now? ”

“ Well,” said the young man, “ I have got to get up some scheme for getting through that bill to turn Washington Square into a repair shop for the Elevated Railroad, or else another man will be sent to Albany in my place. Now, what would you advise? ”

Half an hour later the young man

rose to leave, shaking hands as he did so with his three friends, and assuring them that he was only too grateful for their counsel and promise of assistance, and would certainly reciprocate as soon as the opportunity offered itself.

* * * * *

The four friends stood together shoulder to shoulder at the next session of the Legislature, and so successful were they that the young man's influential New York friends promised that his devotion to the interests of the great corporations of his native city should never be forgotten, and declared that he had taken a good start on the path that leads direct to the gubernatorial chair.

Did he introduce the Washington Square bill himself? No, he did not. He introduced a bill well calculated to meet the approval of the Silk Stocking District, and which made it a penal

offence to use profane language during church hours on Sunday. And under cover of the discussion created by this bill, his trusted friend, Assemblyman Dusenbury, introduced the Washington Park bill, and it passed almost unnoticed. And, in return for this kindness, the young man made the most eloquent speech of his life in favor of Ash Barrel Snyder's amendment to his own original measure, and providing that there should be two men to every broom in the Street Cleaning Department—one man to lift it up and the other to put it down.

But who was this young man? Why, he is simply what is usually termed "the better element in politics."

THE SQUARER.

By a fortunate provision of nature a balm is supplied for every wound, a redress for every wrong, an antidote for every poison, and, as the march of time adds to the existing complications of life new dilemmas, so does nature at the same time offer new ways of avoiding them.

The Squarer is by no means a modern product. He has existed, in a primitive form, it is true, at all times and in every climate, but it is doubtful if he ever reached such a high state of development as in the present period in which his services are in almost constant demand.

I take it for granted that most of

my readers know what I mean when I speak of a Squarer, and, indeed, there are many happy households in which he is a familiar figure, but for the sake of the few who have never been brought in direct contact with this unique and useful character I will state that the Squarer is the high-minded philanthropist whose sole mission in life is to succor those unfortunates who, having pledged the wine-cup with convivial spirits until an unearthly hour in the morning, are afraid to go home unless accompanied by some diplomatic friend who can by sheer force of tact, good-humor, and adroitness, restore them partially to the place which they ought to occupy as the heads of their respective households—in short, to “square them” with their wives.

The difficulties and dangers which beset the Squarer in the performance of his self-imposed duties are apparent

to every one with the slightest experience in life and its vicissitudes, and the fact that his labor is never done for hire and is invariably a matter of pure charity redounds all the more to his credit.

My own opinion is that a coming century will see the greater part of the domestic "squaring" entrusted to professionals, but at present it is exclusively an amateur calling, just as baseball was some years ago. And as the amateur photographers are said to surpass their professional brethren in artistic skill, so have the amateur Squarers raised their delicate and humane art to a plane so high that it will be difficult for any mere money-getting professional to ever hope to rival them. They may, however, surpass the amateurs in the matter of mechanical appliances and devices designed to facilitate their work, but of this I will speak later.

The Squarer who follows his calling for pure love of it is invariably a bachelor, living in rooms which are in most cases on the ground floor, and invariably contain as a necessary article of furniture an immense horse-hair sofa or lounge, soft enough to induce slumber and long and broad enough to accommodate the tallest and most corpulent inebriate that ever waked a friend from a sound sleep at half-past four in the morning by throwing snow-balls against his window and begging to be let in.

The professional Squarer will probably sleep like a fireman, with a "turn-out" beside his bed, and slide down a greased pole in his anxiety to admit the caller who requires his services. Perhaps the competition will be so sharp that other Squarers will attempt to wrest his client from his grasp, and I am positive that each client will be provided with a comfortable bed and

the very best of attendance. Nevertheless, the squaring that will be accomplished by the fee-seeking professional, aided though he be by the finest machinery and a complete system of electric signals, will no more compare in results with the loving work of the zealous amateur than that onion-scented abomination known as fricatelle will compare with good home-made corned beef hash.

Nor will the sleep of honest inebriety be any sweeter or more restful behind pink silk curtains and beneath an eider-down quilt than on the old horse-hair lounge with a cushion for a pillow and an old ulster, carefully spread and tucked in by the Squarer, for a covering.

The Squarer is, as I have said before, a bachelor, and he always possesses a wide circle of friends of convivial tendencies who seem to have some mysterious claim upon his

services and are liable to call upon him at any hour of the day or night—chiefly in the gray hours of the early morning. As a general thing a Squarer remains single to the day of his death, partly because marriage would interfere seriously with the practice of the profession to which he has given his life, and partly because the mere fact of his being actively engaged in squaring serves to awaken a bitter prejudice against him and a keen suspicion of his motives in the minds of the various wives, aunts, mothers-in-law, and other feminine relatives of the men whom he has befriended. I am positive that if any young woman were to receive marked attentions from a notorious Squarer every other woman would warn her against marrying a man of such terribly dissipated habits—the one who kept your Uncle George out so late that dreadful night and had the im-

pudence to come home with him and stay to breakfast, too."

In order that my readers may gain some idea of the nature, extent, and variety of the duties which the Squarer performs as a matter of love and with a zeal akin to that with which a Rothschild enters upon a transaction in three per cent. bonds, let us picture to ourselves a scene in the residential quarter of the town on a cold Sunday morning just as the dawn is beginning to streak the eastern horizon with streaks of pale gray light.

The figure of a man clad in pajamas may be seen peering cautiously out from behind thick curtains through the partially opened window of the room on the ground floor. Two or three snowballs, hurled by a strong arm, are flattened against the panes of glass, and the gentleman who leans rather unsteadily on the fence railing holds another in his hand and is say-

ing plaintively to the gentleman inside: "Yes, it's me, old man, and I want you to go home with me and square it with my wife. You've gotter come! I tell you I dassent show up without you."

Whereupon the pajamaed one—who is none other than the Squarer himself—admits his unsteady friend to his room, puts him to bed on the horse-hair lounge, and then sits down to scrape the mud off his ulster and restore that much abused garment to something like its normal appearance.

At nine o'clock the Squarer's client awakens, refreshed in body and mind, and clamors hoarsely for a cocktail, which he is apt to get if he insists upon it with sufficient obstinacy, although the Squarer will try to convince him that a little acid phosphate in a glass of water is much better for his health.

At ten o'clock they will start for

the home of the client, who generally lives at some distant point, like Harlem or Brooklyn. They will reach their destination a short time before noon, and their reception is sure to be chilly and discouraging. It is precisely at this moment that the Squarer begins to get in his really fine work in behalf of his unfortunate friend.

On entering the house he places the object of his solicitude in a vertical position in an obscure corner of the hall, and then proceeds to shake hands with every member of the family in turn, evincing at the same time the utmost cordiality and utterly ignoring the cold looks of suspicion which will be directed toward him. The mother-in-law, it is true, will press forward eagerly to return his salutation, but that will be because she hopes to catch the odor of a cocktail on his breath. Failing in this, she will resume her customary attitude of frigid reserve.

Sometimes she will go so far as to send the children upstairs, when the Squarer, whose heart is yearning for a little human tenderness and sympathy, gathers them about his knee and tells them delightful fairy stories, in which difficult art he is absolutely without a master.

He excels also in the kindred art of giving a connected, coherent and plausible account of the remarkable chain of circumstances which brought his friend to his rooms, and finally resulted in their joint appearance in the Brooklyn (or Harlem) home at such a very early hour in the day.

It is while the Squarer is telling his story in tones of great earnestness and sincerity to an audience of the sort described in the dramatic departments of newspapers as "coldly critical," that his client first ventures into the parlor. No attention whatever is paid to him when he offers to sub-

stantiate every detail of the narrative, and even the Squarer looks at him in a way that means, "You'd better stay in the hall where I put you until you're sent for. I've got all I can do to make them swallow this story we cooked up without having you come in and queer me right in the middle of it."

As a matter of fact, the client's word carries no more weight with the domestic jury convened in that parlor than that of a convicted murderer at the bar of justice.

A great many accomplishments and rare personal qualities enter into the composition of the successful Squarer, and none of these is of greater importance than his ability to compel the family to believe at least half of the straightforward, unvarnished, and highly interesting account of his friend's adventures, which he tells in such a pleasant and confidential man-

ner. Indeed, it may be truthfully said that that story is the very keystone of the arch on which the future peace and happiness of the convivial client must rest. At the close of his narration signs of a slight thaw are usually visible in the home circle, and the Squarer is likely to be asked to stay to dinner.

This invitation he accepts with becoming humility and gratitude, sometimes throwing out a remark about the loneliness of a bachelor's life and his great fondness for simple home cooking. It is absolutely essential to the success of the Squarer's undertaking that he should remain to dinner, if for nothing more than to do the carving. His client will, it is true, make one or two ineffectual efforts in that direction, but the other will quickly take the knife and fork out of his hands with a "Here, old man, you'd better let me attend to that," and then

will follow an exhibition of expert meat slicing which will go a long way toward restoring the client to his rightful status in the household.

This is the critical point of the Squarer's progress, for if he fails here all his previous good work will be undone. He must carve in such a way as to give every one an apparent abundance and yet leave enough of the fowl or joint to make glad the heart of the housewife as she calculates the number of breakfasts and luncheons that still remain on the dish. Let him spill a single drop of gravy on the tablecloth, and his unfortunate client will have all he can do to square his friend.

It is customary in well regulated families to have a pair of ducks for dinner on such occasions as this, and an accomplished Squarer will display a degree of skill which can be likened only to that of a surgeon in the oper-

ating theatre, cutting away delicate slices of the meat and leaving the bone as clean and white as a piece of celluloid.

Unless the disgraced member of the household contrives to make some unfortunate "break" during the meal the end of the dinner will find everybody in a much happier frame of mind than before, and unless the Squarer happens to possess musical accomplishments of some sort he will take a speedy departure. His client will probably weep over him and beg him to prolong his visit till the next day, but he will finally resist his importunities and depart after having shaken hands all round with much cordiality and lively expressions of gratitude for the hospitality which has been extended to him.

If squaring should ever become one of the learned professions and cease to be the labor of love which it is

now, it will be found that the hired Squarer will never acquire one-half the skill or perform his duties with nearly as much success as the distinguished amateur whom I have in my mind's eye as I write.



THE JOKE THAT FAILED

NEW YORK possesses a practical joker in the person of a gentleman who is widely known to the class that brighten upper Broadway as "Gus" and often as "Gussie." For nearly a score of years this merry sprite has floated like a cork on the waves of life that sweep through the Tenderloin District, and many are the tales that are told of his exploits in the almost forgotten art of practical joking. Now, it must be said in justice to him that Gus despises that form of humor which consists of pulling a chair from under some person who contemplates sitting down on it. To be sure, his jokes often result more disastrously

98 The Joke that Failed.

to the victim, but there's always a certain original turn to them which commends them to the attention of the philosophic student of contemporaneous life and manners.

Now, if there is one thing in which this gifted creature is absolutely without a peer, it is in the art of making a profound impression on newly-arrived foreigners, and particularly on Germans, who are invariably suspicious of people who tell them the truth, and repose a sublime confidence in the statements of all irresponsible, untrustworthy and humorous characters.

Some time ago, a German, a type of the class who call themselves Frenchmen, arrived in New York, and of course speedily made the acquaintance of Gus, the practical joker of upper Broadway. The two became very intimate, and the "Baron," as the new arrival called himself and was

called by his acquaintances, soon developed a profound and abiding faith in the sagacity, veracity, and high social standing of the brilliant wit and famous man-about-town whose acquaintance he had been fortunate enough to form. It was Gus who ushered him into the theatres by the simple expedient of nodding blandly to the doorkeeper. It was Gus who took him to walk on Fifth Avenue, and pointed out to him the most famous statesmen, millionaires, poets and warriors, who all seemed to turn out on the days when Gus took his afternoon stroll, and who (the celebrities) invariably returned his salute in the most cordial and friendly manner.

One day while sitting with Gus and three or four congenial friends in a hostelry kept by one Engel, the Baron expressed a longing to attend some festivity in New York society, in

order that he might compare our *beau monde* with those exalted circles of the Faubourg St. Germain to which he had been accustomed since his earliest years.

“If I only knew one of these big American swells,” remarked the Baron, “I would ask him to introduce me to all the others, and then, of course, if he came to Paris, I’d do the same for him; but I’ve neglected to bring any letters of introduction, and so I don’t see any chance of going to any of their parties. There’s a big blowout at the Astorbilts’ to-night, and I tell you I’d like mighty well to see what it’s like.”

“Why don’t you get Gus to fix you?” said one of the company; “he knows all those nobs.”

“Why, certainly,” cried the obliging Gus. “Why in the world didn’t you ask me before, dear boy? I very seldom go into society myself, but I’d

be delighted to introduce you to some of my bong-tong friends. Here, waiter, bring me a sheet of notepaper and an envelope—a white one, not a yellow one.”

An hour later, the confiding German was on his way to the scene of festivities, holding tightly clutched in his hand the following note of introduction :

“ Friend Astorbilt, this will make you acquainted with my friend, Baron Blank, the society reporter of the *Organ-grinder's Gazette*. I trust that you will extend to him the usual courtesies, and thereby confer a personal favor on your old friend Gussie.”

It was nearly midnight when Gus and his merry men assembled, according to previous agreement, at Mr. Engel's place of refreshment to greet

the Baron, and learn from his own lips the story of his adventures in New York society.

"I don't think he'll be here at all," remarked one of the company; "he probably got fired down the steps so hard that he's lying in the hospital. I must say, Gus, you've got the nerve of an ox to send him up there with that letter of introduction."

"That's all right," rejoined the practical joker, merrily. "If he has the nerve to make a good front he'll get in, and he'll be back here before midnight."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the Baron entered, attired in his Bavarian dress-suit, with a large butterfly cravat flapping about his collar button, and bore down upon the party, his face aglow with exultation.

"Everybody have something with me," he cried, as he seized Gus by

the hand. "I'm ever so much obliged to you, old man, for that letter, and I tell you those Astorbilts are elegant people, and know how to treat a gentleman when they see him. I never was treated so well anywhere in all my life."

"Well, tell us all about it," said the joker, who could scarcely conceal his surprise at the unexpected turn which his joke had taken.

"I went up there and a man opened the door, a nice-looking, well-dressed man, probably one of the family. I gave him your letter and told him I was a reporter, and he didn't even read the letter, but told me to go to another door downstairs under the front steps. When I went in there another gentleman came along, probably the other man's brother. He asked me if I was a reporter, and when I told him yes, he gave me a long list of names, and

invited me to sit down and have some supper. Down I sat at a nice table in the kitchen, and had a beautiful supper, with a whole bottle of wine to myself. That wasn't all. When I was ready to go away, Mr. Astorbilt came along and asked me if I had had a good time and plenty to eat, and I said I had. Then he handed me a lobster patty—here it is ; a chicken patty—here it is, and a bottle of champagne as well." He fished up these delicacies from the recesses of his ulster as he spoke, and laid them on the table before his amazed friends.

"I tell you gentlemen," he said in conclusion, "if there are any people in this town who know a gentleman when they see him and treat him as such, it's that same Astorbilt family. and I'm much obliged to Gus for making me solid there."

DAN BRIORDY'S GITAWAY SHADDER.

FROM late May until early October Dan Briordy may be found at the "Crystal Gem," a sort of dancing pavilion and variety show combined, which he has conducted for several seasons past in the very heart of the most popular quarter of Coney Island.

The equinoctial storms which practically give the deathblow to the summer merriment at this most famous of all American watering places usually leave Mr. Briordy in a condition of mental and financial depression similar to that of a butterfly who

106 Briordy's Gitaway Shadder.

is reminded by the first chill breezes of early fall that sunshine and honey and the sweet flowers of the field are not to be had the whole twelve months through, and that there are many weeks of ice and snow and cold to be bridged over before spring will come again.

Now, Dan Briordy is essentially a creature of summer. The first breath of April warmth sends the blood coursing through his veins and causes his heart to expand and his face to assume that look of joviality and good cheer which, although he probably does not realize it himself, is a powerful factor in attracting strangers to his "Crystal Gem." That smile remains with him until the wailing of the equinoctial gales drives the few remaining customers away from his bar, and gives him time to think about the long, cold winter that lies before him, and for which period of

uncertainty he has, like his prototype, the butterfly, made no provision.

It was at one of these moments that I chanced to encounter him on a bright morning immediately after a three days' September storm of wind and rain. He was sitting entirely alone at a small table in front of his bar. The "Crystal Gem" is open to three of the four winds of heaven, and its proprietor was really a picturesque figure in his red flannel shirt, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and with his rough slouch hat pushed back from his freckled, good-natured and essentially humorous face.

If he had been a *poseur* he could not have selected a better background against which to display himself than the broad expanse of snow-white sand which melted a few hundred feet away into a sea of deep blue, ornamented with white caps of snowy foam. A long clothes line, from

108 Briordy's Gitaway Shadder.

which hung bathing suits of different shapes, colors and degrees of raggedness, heightened rather than marred the effect of the sea and sand.

"Come over here and lend me some of them brains you've got," was my friend's salutation, and as I dropped into a chair beside him he continued: "I'm going to get up a little racket for next week, an' I'd like you to fix up a card of invite that I can send round to me friends."

"What sort of a racket are you arranging for?" I inquired.

"Well, I think it'll be a shadder ball. All I want is to see what some of these fronts are good for and to try and make a little gitaway stake to use as a starter at the Waverly Fair."

Further conversation with Mr. Briordy elicited the intelligence that the "gitaway stake" is simply a sum of money made at the close of the season in one *coup* and used as a

means of getting away from the island to winter quarters in New York or elsewhere. I also learned that a "shadder ball" is an entertainment which begins at nine in the evening with a variety show, for which the "talent" of the different nearby places of amusement usually volunteer, and which ends in a grand ball, a feature of which is the use of colored lights, which are thrown on the dancers with weird and exciting results.

It is customary to sell tickets for an event of this sort, despite the fact that the admittance is free and that the beneficiary expects to make all his money from the sale of refreshments, and it was in order that I might prepare a suitable legend for those tickets that Mr. Briordy invited me to take a seat opposite him at the table and give him the benefit of my talent and experience. With our two heads put together it is not surprising

that an hour later an invitation of my own composition was considered not only appropriate, but elegant and refined, and the tickets were consequently ordered of the printer.

The evening selected for the entertainment found Dan standing near the end of his own bar, where he could have an eye on the cashier, take frequent drinks with his friends, and maintain a general supervision over the festivities. I found him so engaged when I reached the "Crystal Gem" at the fashionably late hour of half-past eleven.

"I thought you'd given me the cold shake!" he exclaimed as his eye fell upon me. (I will remark here that Dan is not a "dis and dat" ruffian.) I've been holding back the grand march in the hope you'd show up, and Taggert's near wild for fear there won't be nobody down here when he starts it. He's dead stuck on him

self as a dancing-master, and he's a strong card at this place when you get him to lead."

While he was speaking a gentleman whom I recognized as Mr. George Taggart, the leader of the smart dancing set of West Brighton, came up to us and remarked "that they'd better begin the march if they expected to have anybody in it." Now Mr. Taggart is not only a society man, but he is a prominent merchant as well, and has long been recognized as a skillful dealer in and manipulator of ice. Indeed it is because his mornings are spent in dalliance with the tongs and pick and his nights as the director of these difficult and graceful manœuvres which have long been a feature of the most exclusive seaside circles, that he has become the extraordinary combination of herculean strength and fawn-like grace that he is to-day.

“Let ’er go, then, George,” remarked Dan carelessly, and the master of ceremonies stood up on a chair and announced that there would be a grand march, followed by a prize waltz for a massive gold sofa, and that, prior to the beginning of the ball, he wished them to understand that he stood ready to enforce with main strength if necessary the rigid code of etiquette which ought to prevail at high-toned affairs of that class. He closed his speech with the significant remark that a “sovereigneer would be give out” to every lady who took part in the grand march and conducted herself as a lady should until the close of the ball.

Then the dancers formed in a long double line on the floor of the pavilion, and those who were present merely as spectators ranged themselves about in various convenient places, and took particular care not

to interfere in any way with Mr. Taggert or his corps of dancers. The line having been formed in accordance with the great leader's ideas of social precedence, the "professor" struck a sharp chord on a piano which had become entirely acclimated to the sea air, and an asthmatic orchestra of three pieces burst into enlivening melody.

"Gents ter de right! Ladies ter de left! I'll break yer eye, Paddy Gilligan, if yer git too fresh!" were the words of command, uttered in strident tones by Mr. Taggert, and the memorable march began. The first couple consisted of a gentleman who has long enjoyed great social prestige in West Brighton, because he was once John Y. McKane's coachman, and a lady named Miss Lottie Reeves, who occupies the same position there that Mme. Emma Eames does in New York, being prominent

114 Briordy's Gitaway Shadder.

as a professional singer and enjoying much popularity in society as well.

After these came a lady who is known professionally to the summer visitors as the "Wild Woman of Coney Island," but who retires at the close of the dime museum season to the peaceful obscurity of the kitchen in Pete Vulney's hotel. The wild lady, who is also a great social favorite, was escorted by an undersized jockey from the Brighton track, who was known to have had at least a dozen winning mounts during the previous fortnight, and was therefore treated with the same degree of deference which it is customary on this planet to show to those who are playing in luck.

A great many of the guests declared that the wild woman was fairly entitled to the place of honor in the procession, because she had attained greater fame than Miss Reeves, and

had been made the subject of one of the highest examples of pictorial art ever seen on the island. In this canvas, which is from the brush of a native Gravesend artist, she is represented as standing in the depths of a jungle near Norton's Point, clad in a single tastefully designed garment of skin, and bidding defiance to a score of men, who look like Gravesend election inspectors, and are evidently desirous of effecting her capture.

It is probable that some other artist will some day portray this accomplished lady in her capacity of a skilled cook, tossing flapjacks high in air, or else as a queen of Coney Island fashion, leading the revels on the arm of a prosperous jockey.

In my mind's eye I can still see the gay procession as it sweeps past me, and can recognize all the familiar forms and faces. There is Miss Vir-

ginia Woodruff, light of foot and merry of face. To see her tripping gayly along in the conventional dress of the period, which one of us would dream of the wealth of exquisite tat-tooing that covers her person from head to foot and makes her one of the loveliest human curiosities ever exhibited to a wondering throng of sightseers?

Jake Vanderlip walks besides her, as proud of his fair partner as he is of his ancient Gravesend lineage. He is telling her of the profit he has made from his cane board this summer, and rumor declares that when another season dawns upon the beach the beautiful red, blue, and yellow pictures of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Twelve Apostles, and the American eagle will have been withdrawn from popular gaze, and that the proud wearer of these precious insignia of art will sit, chastely robed, beside the

ancestral Vanderlip cane board, to be known no longer as the "Tattooed Queen of the South Seas," but as Mrs. Vanderlip, the leader of the *haut ton* of West Brighton.

And after her come the merchant princes of Coney Island, men who know how few clams should be interred in a chowder and how long an ear of corn should be boiled before it becomes a possibility to browse upon it. There are men here, too, who have been renting bathing suits—to gents as well as to ladies—for so many summers that there is no detail in that important branch of commerce that they have not at their fingers' ends. And last of all, marching all alone, about five feet in the rear of the procession, scorned by the ladies and shunned by the men, comes one of the happiest inebriates that it has ever been my lot to behold and envy.

"That feller," remarked Dan apolo-

118 Briordy's Gitaway Shadder.

getically, "was a bartender at the Sea Beach Hotel till this morning, but he got bounced for gettin' full. I'd fire him for being drunk only he's got twenty-nine dollars wages in his pocket and he's blowin' it all in in great style."

Just at this moment the ex-bartender passed us with a merry whoop, paused a moment to execute a few fancy steps for our special delectation, and then swept on at the rear of the procession.

"Yes," admitted Mr. Briordy, "there's a lot of people here tonight, but the spenders ain't come yet. And to tell the truth, there's not much money spent over the bar while the grand march goes on."

At this moment Mr. Taggart came over to us and exclaimed indignantly, "Dat bum has got ter be fired or der dance don't go on. I've pasted him once or twict already, but it don't do

him no good, and unless he gets off de floor der'll be trouble."

Mr. Briordy went at once to the intoxicated bartender, who, during a brief pause in the music, was practising a few picturesque and intricate steps all by himself in the centre of the room, holding up his coat-tails with his hands as he did so, and watching intently the movements of his feet. A moment later Dan rejoined us and said to the floor manager, "Leave him be a little longer. He's got \$15 left out of his pile, and he might just as well spend it here as be robbed of it somewhere else."

With this understanding, and with a sharp warning to the too demonstrative guest, the revels were resumed in such a graceful and fascinating manner that all the bibulous guests deserted the bar and drinking tables in spite of the efforts of the waiters to restrain them, and gathered in an

awestruck circle to gaze upon the great Taggert and his marching cohorts.

"I'll have to put a stop to this business," said Mr. Briordy disconsolately. "The trouble with that fellow Taggert is that he leads too well, and when he's leading the march they don't spend no money over the bar. They'd all rather watch him than buy drinks. Hullo, there comes a couple of wine openers now," and he hurried off to greet the new arrivals.

At this moment the bartender, who had been engaged in scattering his accrued wealth, proved so refractory that the director of the march seized him by the throat and sent him spinning across the floor, over a table and against a whitewashed wall, where he remained poised for a full moment, and then fell to the floor. In a few moments he was himself again, but before he could return to the dance

Mr. Taggert had, in obedience to orders, but with great reluctance, brought the grand march to a close, and the festivities were suspended for a few moments to permit the guests to spend a little money at the bar.

The newcomers now set a good example to the others by ordering champagne in the most liberal manner, and Dan Briordy's face fairly beamed as he hustled actively about with a word here, a handshake there, and a drink somewhere else, encouraging the hilarity, or, as he himself expressed it, "giving the gang the grand jolly."

When the shadow dance began I happened to be partaking of an ear of hot corn in company with the elegant Miss Lottie Reeves, and we re-entered the pavilion, cob in hand, to find the company gayly waltzing in the glare of everchanging colored lights.

Ah, that moonlight night, with the fresh breeze in our faces and the sullen roar of the sea in our ears! That bar-room, with its flood of gaudy calcium lights and scores of fleet-footed, joyous inebriates! That beer that lurked coyly beneath the froth at the very bottom of the glass! That hot corn, with its delicious seasoning of rancid butter! These are a few of the memories that come to me when I recall Dan Briordy and his "Gitaway Shadder."

So the moments sped by until nearly two o'clock, when we were warned by the sound of approaching footsteps, accompanied by strains of martial music and the shouts of an enraptured populace, that there were other diversions on the island that night besides ours.

Dan started up anxiously and stepped out on the board walk to see if it could be possible that some rival

manager had started another "shadder" in opposition to his. No; the approaching revellers were from the "Glass Pavilion," and they were marching with their manager at their head to pay a friendly visit to the proprietor of the "Crystal Gem." Into the pavilion they marched, a double column of fully two score, and twice did they circle about the floor to the strains of their own band, and amid the welcoming plaudits of every one assembled. Then they seated themselves at the long table and called for Milwaukee beer, which costs twenty cents a bottle, and is looked upon at Coney Island as the beverage of opulence and effete luxury.

This accession to the number of Mr. Briordy's guests gave a fresh impetus to the hilarity, and from that moment on the fun was fast and furious, until the wandering bartender,

124 Briordy's Gitaway Shadder.

having spent the last of his \$29, and endeavored to procure a final round of beer on credit, was seized by the indignant Mr. Taggert, who had been biding his time for several hours, and cast into outer darkness. Soon after this daylight began to appear in the east, and I took my departure, thankful to learn at the final moment that "Dan" Briordy's "Gitaway Shadder" had proved an overwhelming financial success, and that the "sovereigneers" would be distributed an hour later.

THE WARDMAN'S WOOING.

“No, William,” said Mary Doublefare, gently, yet with a note of unmistakable firmness in her voice, “it is useless for you to urge me. While you were in this precinct I learned to respect you for your many good qualities, and I shall always hold you in high esteem, but I do not love you, and although I believe that you have a golden future before you—a future which any young girl ought to be proud to share—I cannot marry you. Where my hand goes my heart must go too.”

“One word more,” said William Cinch, the dashing and accomplished wardman of the merriest precinct in

the town, "before the curtain is rung down forever on the little drama, or comedy, in which we have been the principal actors. Tell me, I implore you, has any other man come between us? I have heard it said more than once that Walter Dealbrace was your devoted admirer, and besides,"—and here his voice grew hard and cold—"it's only last week that I seen you talking in a doorway with Rupert Flimflam."

The young girl's lip curled contemptuously as she made answer: "Mr. Dealbrace will have to do something to change his luck before he presumes to say anything about love to me. It is not likely that we will meet again for some time."

"What! Have you parted forever?" cried the detective, eagerly.

"We have," rejoined the maiden, icily, "unless he happens to bring back those four bones I let him have

a month ago. As for Rupert Flimflam," she continued, carelessly, but with no trace of contempt or bitterness in her voice, "my feelings toward him are only those which any lady might entertain toward a gentleman whom she had met but three times in her life, once at the Gold Brick Coterie's moonlight, and twice, casually, in doorways.

"I will be frank with you, William, however, and say that I have been strongly attracted by Mr. Flimflam, not so much on account of the way in which he has been putting out those new fives, but because of his high sense of honor and engaging personality as well."

"But it is scarcely probable," she continued, "that Mr. Flimflam, with his golden prospects, will deem it worth his while to pay court to the daughter of poor old Jack Doublefare, for, as you well know, cab-driving in

the old Tenderloin is by no means what it was before these reformers, as they are called, ruined the precinct and reduced so many of us to beggary."

"Ah, Mary!" exclaimed the young wardman, sympathetically, "it breaks my heart to think of you and your father, now that the Tenderloin is dried up, and there's no elephant for the jays to see. This winter is going to be an easy one for the jays, though they won't appreciate their blessings, but a very cold one for the smart people, and between you and me, this very Tenderloin, where you've been born and brought up, ain't going to be much warmer than the North Pole! Think of all this, Mary, ere you refuse the home which I offer to you both."

At this allusion to her father, once the wealthiest night-hawk in the precinct, but now a gray-haired, poverty-

stricken man, every trace of coldness and haughty pride disappeared from Mary Doublefare's face, and a big tear coursed down her cheek as she exclaimed in broken accents :

"William—Mr. Cinch—do not, I implore you, speak of that. My poor, dear father,"—and burying her head in her hands she wept bitterly.

"Alas!" she said, presently, "the future is indeed dark before us, and I can scarcely restrain my grief when I contrast our bitter poverty of to-day with the affluence which we enjoyed but a few short years ago, when good, kind Captain Fatwad ruled in the precinct, and free trade and protection went hand in hand.

"There was scarcely a morning then when dear papa did not come home after his night's work with diamond pins and watches and rolls of bills that he had found on his fares, and we were—oh, so happy. The

streets were full of guys then, and by nightfall there was hardly a sober one to be found among them all. I know but little of political economy or sociology, William. I have not read much of John Stuart Mill or Herbert Spencer, but surely heaven never sent a more precious gift to one of its well beloved precincts than a plentiful crop of drunks. Why, they are the very life of trade of every sort. It is the drunks who keep on buying more drinks, who play the wheel on a system, who keep on opening the same bottle of wine until the waiter brings in a check for \$65, who hire cabs by the hour and go to sleep in them—in short, the drunks are to a community all that the rain, the fertilizer and the seed are to the soil which the farmer tills. Ah, why do these cruel reformers keep all the tipplers away from the precinct in which they used to be so happy? I am sure

that if they only knew how terribly poor papa has suffered, even their hard hearts would be touched. His cough has been very bad of late. He has been accustomed all his life to the bracing night air, and when he attempted to drive his cab about in the daytime the sunshine proved too much for him, and he caught cold, which settled on his lungs, and now, although the doctor has forbidden him to go out until after dark, he finds that he is sensitive to even the moonlight, and he has suffered terribly during the clear nights we have had lately.

“ But it is useless for us to discuss this matter further. You must leave me now, William, and I sincerely hope that you will find some one who will make you very, very happy. Good-bye, and thank you for all the kindness you have shown me.”

And with these words in his ears

the stalwart young ward man walked away, sorrowfully, and with bowed head.

A cold, dreary, rainy autumnal night. The whole town seems weighted down with the gloom and wretchedness of the soggy atmosphere, but nowhere is the desolation so awful and depressing, and at the same time so pathetic, as in the deserted village called the Tenderloin.

Here the chill wind sweeps in moaning gusts through streets whose gravelike silence only serves as a reminder of those joyous nights of old, when they resounded to the popping of champagne corks, the rattle of ivory chips, the cheerful hiss of the electric light, the melody from a score of pianos and the shrill cry of the nighthawk as he fell upon his prey.

At a Sixth Avenue corner stands a

hack whose forlorn and dilapidated appearance is in perfect accord with the deserted precinct in which it has been for two decades a familiar object. The ancient white horse in the shafts, and the driver on the box—an old man, bent and gray—are as motionless as if they were posing in a living picture, and as indifferent to the elements as if they were carved out of stone.

The equipage attracts the attention of William Cinch, who has come up town from his own happy, prosperous precinct in company with a gentleman of rural aspect who wears long gray whiskers and has sawdust sprinkled over his clothes. It is apparent to every old Tenderloiner who notices the pair that the bucolic gentleman is a "come-back" whom William, the ever alert and faithful public servant, is chasing out of town for being a counterfeiter, and as the unfortunate

man starts for the Pavonia ferry the wardman fixes his eyes upon the old hack driver and murmurs compassionately :—

“Poor old Jack Doublefare ! I can remember the time when hardly a week went by without some jay waking up in that old cab to find that his watch and pin and roll had been took away while he was asleep. He always made a clean job of it, did old Jack. But now he's only a wreck of what he was.”

Then, as he strolled slowly along through the rain, his thoughts turned to gentle Mary Doublefare, whom he had not seen since that memorable evening, three months before, when she had definitely and finally refused his proffered hand.

He thought of her with infinite sadness and longing, but without a trace of bitterness, remembering the gracious, innocent smile with which she

used to greet him, and the delight that used to illumine her sweet face when he brought her the choicest fruits that could be found on any stand that he permitted to obstruct the sidewalk in his precinct, or placed in her hand some trinket that had served as a souvenir in a wealthy family.

And he remembered, too, how they used to sit side by side on the sofa in her little parlor and merrily invent names to fit the initials which were graven on his simple gifts, and then search the "Lost and Stolen" column to see if there was any reference to them there.

Ah! those were happy days, and now he wondered if Mary's heart were still her own to bestow upon some fortunate suitor. His face hardened as he thought of Rupert Flimflam, nimble of finger and persuasive of tongue—just the man to enchain the fancy of a high-spirited,

romantic and altogether "fly" young girl.

And Walter Dealbrace—he of the clean-cut profile and cold gray eye—but no, Walter was in no condition now to pay his addresses to any woman brought up amid the luxurious surroundings to which, as the daughter of one of the wealthiest of the Tenderloin's old-time nighthawks, she had been accustomed from the moment of her birth until that of the destruction of the precinct. Time was when Walter dressed in the height of fashion, and when his high-bred, sensitive nature recoiled from contact with anything but blue chips. But now he was sadly changed.

William had seen him but once in six months. It was on the night when he had dropped in at the club-rooms of Colonel Endsqueeze to notify him of an intended raid on his premises, and he had found it hard to

recognize the once prosperous faro scientist in the dejected figure that he saw seated before a consumptive looking stack of whites, which soon melted away before his gaze like a stereopticon advertisement in Broadway.

No, he need not fear Walter Dealbrace as a rival, but his brow darkened once more as he thought of Rupert Flimflam, and his eyes flashed as the idea came to him that it would be an easy matter to "pinch" the bright and entertaining young man who was so merrily flooding the town with his new fives. But to do that he must betray his superior officer, Captain Fatwad, under whose protection Rupert pursued his calling, and never in the course of his whole career as a detective had William Cinch been found wanting in allegiance to the department which gave him employment.

It would be far better for him to give up all hope of winning Mary Doublefare than to interfere with the business of a man who had paid fairly for his protection, and was fairly entitled to something for his money.

"Poor Mary!" he said to himself with a sorrowful shake of the head, "I'm afraid that things are not coming her way to any fabulous extent just now, and she is too proud to accept assistance from me. If I could only help her in such a way that she would not find out that it was me who done it!"

And at that moment William Cinch stopped suddenly in his walk, stood for a moment wrapped in intense thought, then turned, and, with a low-muttered "I'll do it to-night!" hurriedly retraced his steps down the avenue.

The changing scenes of this little

drama bring us once more to the humble home of the Doublefares. It is half-past six in the morning, and Mary has arisen early, according to her invariable custom, that she may prepare breakfast for her father on his return from his night's labors. A slow step in the hall followed by the opening of the door, and the young girl is in her aged parent's arms.

"Father!" she cried with an infinite yearning in her voice, "did that same fellow turn up again and ask you to take him around and show him all the sights?"

In reply the old nighthawk took from the inner pocket of his overcoat and placed in his daughter's hand a roll of bills, a diamond pin and a handsome gold watch and chain.

"I never see such a persistent guy nor one with so many new outfits of solid stuff in all the years I've been driving hack," he remarked with some-

thing like reverence in his voice. "You'd oughter seen the other drivers racin' for him when he showed up in Sixth Avenue with his load aboard. Drunk? Well, I should say so. Why, what ails ye, gal?"

"Nothing, father. Only it was so cold waiting here for you," she responded quickly. But as she busied herself about the breakfast-table he noticed that her face was pale, while her lips trembled, as if from some deep emotion.

That afternoon, while the white-haired hack driver was sleeping noisily in the adjoining room, Mary Doublefare sat in a rocking-chair by the window, holding in her hand a simple cluster pin, now wet with her tears. She wondered why it was that she did not suspect from the very first the identity of the stranger who for three successive nights had entered her father's cab, artfully disguised as

an inebriated Syracuse merchant, and permitted himself to be shorn of money, watch and jewels under the pretence of being taken to see the elephant.

Had it not been for that cluster pin, which she had seen him wear so many, many times, she would never have guessed that it was to William Cinch, the rejected lover, that they owed their recent burst of good fortune. But the pin had told the story, and the watch—the gift of a pawnbroker—she also recalled, for William had proudly shown it to her the very day after the big burglary in New Rochelle.

Yes, the inexhaustible fountain of good stuff was none other than the noble, high-minded wardman, whose hand she had refused, kindly, it is true, but none the less firmly. With what exquisite tact and delicacy had he sought to do her and her

father a kindness ! Could anything have been better calculated to win a woman's love and admiration than a generosity which, while accomplishing its purpose, avoided all appearance of charity ?

And how much good it had done her father—the excitement of following once more his old calling ! Never since the passing of the old precinct had her sire seemed so vigorous and hearty, so full of hope for the future and enjoyment of the present, as he had since his first meeting with the mysterious victim, who always fell sound asleep in the cab and never seemed to know or care what happened to him.

And now, with her tears falling swiftly on the cluster pin and blotting out the inscription — “ Wentworth from Uncle Jabez ”—in the inside of the watch, poor Mary Doublefare realized the true worth of the death-

less love which this noble wardman had placed at her feet, and which she had spurned. If she could but see him for a moment, if only to thank him—to tell him, before they parted forever, that she knew all that he had done for her and that she appreciated the exquisite tact with which he had performed what was, after all, an act of simple charity.

And then the awful fear that perhaps he had found solace for his wounded heart came upon her with crushing force. She had heard, since their last meeting, that he had become attentive to Susan Knockout, the daughter of the celebrated chemist, Percival Knockout, well known as a replater of gold bricks and the discoverer of the famous elixir of sleep, called in his honor “knockout drops.”

She had paid but little heed to that rumor at the time, knowing that as

wardman of his precinct it was but natural for him to have business dealings with Susan's father which might occasion frequent visits to the chemist's house. But now the thought of Susan fell upon her heart with a dead, leaden weight, and she would have given the world for a chance to see, if but for a single moment, the handsome young official whom she had at last learned to love.

But how to accomplish this ! Just at this moment her eyes fell upon "Marcella," which she had just finished, and in a moment she had reached a decision.

"Papa," she said, that evening, as the old cabman was starting out for his night's work, "if you have that fellow again for a fare I want you to say to him, just as if you were giving him a jolly, 'I've got a daughter at home who's dead gone on you, and thinks you'd make a splendid husband.'

Just say that to him, papa, and let me know what answer he gives you."

The old man promised and kept his word.

The rest of this little tale may be told in a few words. William Cinch heard the message, and hastened to respond. Mary Doublefare met him on the threshold, and within a very short time the compact had been sealed which bound them together for life.

Christmas time found the loving couple established in a home of their own in the beautiful precinct over which their former friend, Captain Fatwad, ruled with a benign sway. As for old Jack Doublefare, he secured, through the influence of his son-in-law, the exclusive right to drive "guys" through Central Park, and his carriage is now known as the "joint on wheels," in which many a neat trick has been turned.

THE CHANGE OF THE LUCK.

A COLD, stormy night in November, the wind sweeping through the streets in fitful gusts and the rain beating down in chilly, penetrating torrents on the few belated pedestrians who hurried through the streets, thinking longingly of the light and warmth of saloon or home. A cheerless, dreary night throughout the whole city, and nowhere gloomier than in the once merry and wide-open precinct over which the excellent Captain Fatwad had reigned for three sunny, prosperous years, and above which now hung the dark, ominous clouds of depression and disaster, which threatened to

148 The Change of the Luck.

crush out all the life and activity from the Captain's fair domain.

Wet and cheerless in the storm-beaten streets, and dry and desolate in the brightly-lighted saloons, where melancholy citizens huddled about the stove and thought with fond regret of the kindly drink-buying politicians who used to drop in so frequently with hospitable intent in the old glad days—the days that were gone forever. But there were warmth and light and good cheer, as well, in the comfortable room where Percival Knockout, the gray-haired alchemist sat before the fire with his little boy, Willie, on his knee and his fair daughter, Susan, by his side.

Far and wide throughout the precinct was the aged man of science known and honored, not only for his professional skill and learning, but also as a humanitarian—one whose pocket was ever open to relieve dis-

tress, whose cunning hand and knowledge of drugs and potions were ever at the disposal of the weak and unfortunate. It was he who had invented the delicious nepenthe named in his honor "knockout drops," and of which but a single globule sufficed to bring about a profound, painless slumber, broken only by dreams of fast-accruing wealth—a mysterious, fateful potion which had, in the estimation of such men as Captain Fatwad and William Cinch, his faithful wardman, added more largely to the material prosperity of the precinct than had any other invention of the age.

But to-night, as the little family sat before the glowing grate fire, their talk was not of the secrets of the laboratory, the wonderful discoveries which had brought fame to the gray-haired sire and would have brought wealth, too, had it not been for the

open-handed charity and philanthropy which had always kept him poor. Their thoughts were of their old friends and neighbors on whom the blight of poverty and misfortune had fallen with crushing weight.

“I called on poor Mary Sawdust to-day, papa,” said Susan, “and it made me heartsick to see what distress they are in. The plating is all worn off their gold brick, and Henry has no dye for his mustache. I promised Mary that you would replating the brick for them and send them a little of our best purple hair-dye to-morrow morning. Was I right, papa?”

“Certainly, my child,” responded the father cheerfully, “I am sure that the talents which Providence has bestowed upon me can be put to no better use than that of giving aid to those of our friends who have suffered.”

"I met Rupert Flimflam in the street to-night," continued Susan, "and he, too, is playing in hard luck. I promised him something to make his silk hat shiny again. We must see to it the first thing in the morning."

"These are terrible times, my daughter," said the father sadly. "While you were out this morning I had a call from our old friend Colonel Endsqueeze. He has aged terribly since I last saw him, and when I asked him what he was doing he seemed ashamed to tell me, but before he left he confessed to me that he had actually been obliged to go to work and had accepted a position in a shoe store.

"And his beautiful long white hands! What will become of them?" exclaimed the young girl. "Oh! papa, it is too terrible to think of. How thankful I am that we still have

our own house, humble as it is, and enough to keep want from our door."

"Poor child," said the old alchemist to himself, as his daughter left her place by the fireside to attend to her household duties, "she little dreams of the blow that has fallen upon us too. I dare not tell her just now. She will know the truth only too soon."

Well might Percival Knockout feel dispirited, for that very day Captain Fatwad had called to tell him that little Willie had lost his position under the city government and that his name would be withdrawn from the payrolls, where it had figured ever since he was six months old as inspector of moonshine at a salary of \$60 a month. It was the kind Captain himself who had secured the child's appointment as a mark of affection for the old alchemist, whom all loved and venerated, and it was a bitter grief to the

gallant officer when the awful political upheaval compelled his removal.

Filled with sad forebodings for the future, the old chemist rose from his seat and retired to his laboratory in the adjoining room, and there, surrounded by his well-loved retorts and crucibles, he strove to efface from his mind all recollection of the great sorrow that had come upon him.

Such was Percival Knockout's mental training that he could at all times find distraction from the temporal ills of life by immuring himself in his laboratory and delving deep into the mysterious science of alchemy, whose occult secrets were to him as an open book. At the time of which I write he was engaged in the development of an invention, on which he had already expended years of patient, scientific research, and which he finally hoped would be the crowning triumph of his life. This invention

was nothing less than an instantaneous process for removing the red and black spots from cards. By its use the value of a card could be instantly changed, so that a player holding two fours and a five spot could, by means of a forefinger dipped in this solution, secure three fours, while the simple process of shuffling the pack was sufficient to rub off the preparation and restore the card to its normal condition.

With this important discovery the inventor firmly believed that the game of poker, which was looked upon by the citizens of the precinct as one of the exact sciences, could be completely revolutionized, and his own name handed down to posterity, crowned with an everlasting fame.

Deeply engrossed in the final tests of his invention, the hoary man of science did not hear a modest tap on the outer door, nor his daughter's ex-

clamation of surprise as the new-comer entered the parlor.

"You here, Walter!" she cried. "I thought that when we parted last it was to meet no more. Have you no fear of my father's wrath? He has never forgiven you for turning him down as you did the last time you were here. But you seem to be playing in great luck now, Walter. Can it be that things are running your way again?"

The young man drew from his pocket a handful of blue celluloid disks about an inch and a half in diameter.

"I'm playing nothing but blue chips this season, Susan," he answered briefly.

The young girl's eyes flashed with a sunny, tender light as they beheld the familiar symbols of wealth.

"Why, those are worth five dollars apiece!" she cried. "But why did

you neglect to cash in at the close of the game? I trust that nothing has happened to the bank roll."

Walter Dealbrace laughed merrily as he replaced the faro chips in his pocket.

"I always bring a few of these away with me and flash them up now and then so as to inspire confidence. But, Susan, I have come once more to ask you to be my wife. I am no longer the poor, broken-down Walter whom you knew a year ago. Then I had a system for playing the wheel, and nothing but a few puny white chips to play it with. But now——"

He stopped short and threw back his overcoat, revealing his handsome frock coat and gray trousers, costly scarfpin and heavy gold watch-chain.

"Now," he continued, slowly, as he once more drew the handful of blue disks from his pocket, "I am playing nothing but these. It is a bright

azure future that I have to offer to you, Susan. Will you share it with me ?”

The young girl seemed deeply affected, and it was with trembling lips and eyes running over with tears that she replied :—

“ Oh, Walter, I cannot—I dare not answer you. My father’s will is law to me, although I am of legal age, and he is very bitter against you. He has forbidden all mention of your name since the day that you borrowed his holdout and eight bones and then passed away from our sight, as we thought, forever.”

“ Susan, hear me, I pray you,” pleaded the young man. “ I found when I sat in the game that night that the holdout had lost its cunning, and I dropped the eight bones together with two of my own, and then passed out into the cold and silent night, a penniless orphan. But your

158 The Change of the Luck.

father does not feel harshly to me, else I would not have dared to call here again ; for it is only three weeks ago that he sent me a bottle of hair-dye——”

“ No, Walter,” said the young girl, shyly, while a soft blush suffused her delicate cheeks ; “ it was I who sent you the hair-dye, for I had heard that you were in pitiful straits, and I knew what a terrible thing it was for you to be without dye for your mustache——”

“ You sent it ! ” he cried excitedly. “ Then may Heaven reward you, for it was your simple gift that changed my luck. Listen, and I will explain it to you. The morning after I applied the dye I found to my horror that it had stained my mustache a deep blue, and then I realized with feelings of bitter despair, that I was alone in the world with a blue mustache and a handful of white chips that

I had brought away with me from the faro table the night before, and which were worth but ten cents apiece."

"Merciful Heavens!" cried the young girl. "I sent you the wrong bottle by mistake. How could I have been so careless? But, Walter, I meant to do you a kindness. Indeed I did."

"Hear me to the end, Susan," continued her lover. As I glanced from the looking-glass to the little pile of chips a sudden thought struck me, and with trembling hands I opened the bottle and applied some of the fluid to one of the white disks, converting it in an instant into a blue chip, worth just \$5. Since then I have devastated the faro banks of our precinct like a raging lion, and every day I have converted a dozen or more white chips into blue ones. But my bottle of hair-dye is all gone, and I must have another. With your father's

aid I shall become rich beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. Then, Susan, you must become my bride, and it will be my happiness to toil for you and make you the best and steadiest husband ever known in this precinct. So long as the gas burns and the chips rattle I will labor for you at the green cloth, and I will give my solemn promise to keep away from the roulette wheel and to play nothing but case cards at faro."

* * * * *

It was a merry company that sat down to the simple meal in the old alchemist's happy home that night, for Susan found it an easy matter to effect a reconciliation between her father and the dashing young lover who had made such a wonderful discovery. A few weeks later Susan Knockout became the bride of Walter Dealbrace, and so prosperous did all the members of the family become

that they never really felt the loss of little Willie's salary of sixty bones, and to this day Susan Dealbrace firmly believes that it is still paid to her father every month.

MR. SYNICK'S ANTI-BAD-BREAK.

It was Mr. Synick who, last week, startled that section of the community which dwells under the shadow of the big S in Society by an invention of his own which is likely to come into general use before the season is over.

Dolly Fatwitt, of the Simian Club, who had a seat at Mr. Synick's table the night that the new device was first given to the world, admits that the idea is a good one, but declares that he will never forgive his host for springing it upon them with a suddenness calculated to dethrone the reason of any one accustomed to the habits of conventional society.

“ I am assure you, deah boy,” said this distinguished cotillon leader, when questioned about the affair, “that it literally knocked the breath out of my body—it came so sudden and was so entirely unexpected, you know; and if that man Synick hasn’t a fearful nerve, then I’m mistaken.”

“ But what did Mr. Synick do? That’s what I’ve been trying to find out——”

“ One moment, deah boy; upon me soul you’re too precipitate. I had a card for his dinner. Turned up at the propah time—they were just finishing the soup—and took my seat next to Mrs. Willie Poppinjay, a most charming woman, by the way; and just as I was putting me glass in me eye, I happened to notice a big card with printing on it lying at my place. I took me glass out of me eye so as to read it, for I thought it might be some mining stocks, such as were given to

us the night we all agreed to dine with the Paydirts in their new house (and lots of good that did them, that dinner, for of course we all cut them dead the next week, because they were impossible!). But it wasn't a mining share—for of course the Synicks don't have to give presents with their dinners, though they may have to if they spring any more such schemes——”

“ But, in the name of Heaven, what *was* the card that you mistook for a share of mining stock ? ”

“ Here it is,” said Mr. Fatwitt, taking from the table a card containing the following legend :

“ SYNICK'S ANTI-BAD-BREAK ; OR,
THE FOOL-KILLER DISPENSED WITH.

“ *Mr. Fatwitt.*

“ Please bear in mind that Mrs. Poppinjay, on your left, is just coming out for the first time after her second

divorce, and that she will probably marry young Freshly Kawt, who sits beside her.

“ No. 2.—Mr. Kawt does not know much of anything, and will probably marry Mrs. Poppinjay.

“ No. 3.—Mr. Skinnem is the son of old Jabez Skinnem, who broke the Suckers' National Bank, and is now living in Montreal. Young Mr. Skinnem is merely tolerated in society because it is thought that he will be his father's heir.

“ No. 4.—Miss Kerfew is one of the worst amateur actresses in America, and *the* worst reader and reciter east of the Alleghanies. She gives recitations at the slightest provocation.”

“ There are two things I would like to know,” said Mr. Fatwitt, as he put the card carefully away. “ One is, what that picture means of a man treading on eggs without smashing

'em, and the other is why he put on Mrs. Poppinjay's card that I was a member of the Simian Club and was wearing half-mourning for Mr Crowley of Central Park. Why, I never heard of the man in my life."

FREAKS AND KINGS.

THE superb oil paintings outside the Bowery dime museums offer a fruitful field for the study of royalty as it is to day. From these pictures, vivid in color and picturesque in composition, we, in democratic America, glean our information of the daily lives of kings. They teach us also that physical malformation or eccentricity is the surest passport to royal favor and invariably secures for the afflicted one that presentation at Court which is the ambition of every society woman in America.

By careful study of these Bowery paintings we learn that when a Dog-Faced Boy or a Toeless Lady is las-

soed in the Caucasus—a region abounding in “freaks” and other large game—the captive is conveyed at once to St. Petersburg, and there exhibited to the Czar, the Imperial Family and any guests of distinction who may happen to be there at the time. The reception usually takes place beneath the shadow of the Alexander column, in the grand square in front of the Winter Palace, where a regiment of the Imperial Guard has been drawn up. The Czar, correctly attired in a linen duster trimmed with catskin—a precaution necessary in that latitude—gazes at the Toeless Woman in speechless wonder. Prince Bismarck, who signed the Treaty of Frankfort with the placidity of a polar bear, and engineered the Berlin Conference with the subtle craft of a weasel, stands utterly unnerved before the Leopard Boy. So Von Moltke, who sat like a

statue on his horse at Sadowa waiting for the Crown Prince's division, absolutely unconcerned, though the destiny of Prussia hung in the balance, is strangely moved now. His lips quiver and his limbs tremble, for he is gazing at the Ossified Man, who has stopped at St. Petersburg on his way from the coast of Tartary to the borders of Chatham Square, New York.

It is a noteworthy fact that, owing to political differences, the German Chancellor and Chief of Staff never visit the Russian capital except to behold the wonders that are destined for New York museums. Then one touch of the unnatural makes the whole world kin.

The receptions accorded to freaks at other European courts, though fully as ceremonious and flattering as those in St. Petersburg, differ from them in many respects. In Berlin, for ex-

ample, they are held, as a general thing, in the throne-room of the Royal Palace, and the rigid etiquette of the Hohenzollern Court ordains that the Emperor shall wear on such occasions an ermine mantle, fastened at the throat with a large "buzzom pin," and long enough to trail on the floor behind him. Prince Bismarck, General von Moltke and other distinguished statesmen and warriors never fail to attend in full uniform.

Sometimes the freak is dragged into the Imperial Presence by a company of marines, and sometimes it is introduced by a polished and scholarly "lecturer" in a swallow-tail coat. But no matter in what way the prodigy is brought before Royalty the actions of the great men of the earth are the same. They vie with one another in facial contortions expressive of amusement and incredulity. Visiting kings, queens and emperors,

whose mania for viewing human freaks is well known to everybody who has walked from Chatham Square to Fourteenth Street, frequently journey to Berlin from their own capitals for the purpose of attending these receptions. They either bring their crowns with them or else borrow an old one of the emperor's, but it is contrary to etiquette for them to appear without that kingly form of head covering.

As for the freaks who are honored by these attentions, custom compels them to become a hundredfold more freakish than they are before an ordinary Bowery audience. The Wild Idiot Boy struggles frantically with that portion of the Landwehr which discovered and captured him in the heart of the Hartz mountains, while his face wears a look of hopeless idiocy, similar to that noted by scientists in exclusive social gatherings

in New York. The Human Griddle Cake broils himself on the palace-range in the presence of the wondering sovereigns. The Tattooed Lady becomes as lustrous as a prism out of a glass chandelier; while the Toeless Wonder has fully ten toes less than she displays in Fourteenth Street. The Transparent Man is so transparent that the Czar of Russia, looking through his left leg, readily distinguishes the features of Prince Bismarck on the other side, and undoubtedly wishes that he could see through the wily German Chancellor too.

The Human Pin Cushion, who recently appeared at the Berlin court, accompanied by a voluble, swallow-tailed "agent," fairly surpassed his own record as a pin-cushion by driving spikes and darning-needles into all parts of his body, while the royal and imperial company gazed upon

him open-mouthed with wonder and delight; and Prince Bismarck called his master's attention to him by a well-aimed nudge under the ribs.

In England, as well as on the Continent and the Bowery, freaks are the recipients of marked attentions. The Queen is never so happy as when she stands on the terrace in front of Windsor Castle, conversing on the leading events of the day with the Man with Two Mouths, or turning the skipping-rope for the Four-Legged Girl, to jump over. Small wonder that the greater part of the British army turns out to view this beautiful and instructive spectacle; that Mr. Gladstone comes from the House of Commons, and that the Prince of Wales appears in the same uniform which he wears while smoking various favorite brands of cigarettes!

And whenever I notice a freak

sitting on his platform, with a far-away look in his eyes, while the lecturer delivers his glowing eulogy, and when I see that he is listless and indifferent, and has not the ambition to make himself transparent or waterproof or fireproof, or whatever else the oil painting outside may call for, then I know that his thoughts are far away in Buckingham Palace or gay St. Petersburg, where he once revelled among the greatest of the earth.

THE END.

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